



ANGLO-ITALIAN CULTURAL RELATIONS IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

Edited by MICHELE CAMPOPIANO and HELEN FULTON

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Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations in the Later Middle Ages

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Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations in the Later Middle Ages

Edited by
Helen Fulton and Michele Campopiano



THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

YORK MEDIEVAL PRESS

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Helen Fulton, University of Bristol
Michele Campopiano, University of York

¹ The project website is at: <http://www.italianrenaissanceinbritain.org.uk/>

ABBREVIATIONS

ASL	Archivio di Stato di Lucca
BL	London, British Library
CCR	<i>Calendar of the Close Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office</i> , ed. Deputy Keeper of the Records (London, 1892–1963)
CFR	<i>Calendar of the Fine Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office</i> , ed. Deputy Keeper of the Records (London, 1911–)
CLB(A–L)	<i>Calendar of Letter-Books preserved among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall</i> , ed. R. R. Sharpe, 11 vols. (London, 1899–1912)
CPMR	<i>Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls preserved among the archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall</i> , vols. 1–4 ed. A. H. Thomas, vols. 5–6 ed. P. E. Jones (Cambridge, 1926–61)
CPR	<i>Calendar of the Patent Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office</i> , ed. Deputy Keeper of the Records (London, 1901–)
CSPVen	<i>Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, relating to English affairs, existing in the archives and collections of Venice, and in other libraries of northern Italy</i> , 40 vols., ed. R. Brown, H. F. Brown, G. Cavendish Bentinck and A. B. Hinds (London 1864–1947)
EIDB	England's Immigrants Database [http://www.englandsimmigrants.com]
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> , online edition (Oxford, 2004) [http://www.oxforddnb.com]
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> (Oxford, 2017)
Rot. Parl.	<i>Rotuli Parliamentorum; ut et Petitiones, et Placita in Parlamento</i> , 6 vols. (London, 1783)
SAB	Stadsarchief, Brugge
TNA	The National Archives, London

Introduction: Historical and Literary Connections between Britain and Italy in the Middle Ages

Michele Campopiano

This collection of eight chapters brings together recent original research on historical and literary interactions between Britain and Italy in the medieval and late-medieval periods. The aim of the book is to illustrate the continuity and significance of these interactions throughout the Middle Ages and the variety of ways in which British and Italian cultures spoke to each other about commerce, politics, recording the past, living in the present, and the life of the mind.

The relationships between Italy and the British Isles may not appear to be a particularly new topic for medieval scholars. The field of medieval British–Italian relations has typically been dominated by discussions of humanism and literary borrowings and there is a long and strong tradition of studies in this field. This is exemplified by the works of such scholars as Piero Boitani, with important contributions such as *English Medieval Narrative in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, and his edited volumes, *Chaucer and the Italian Trecento* and *The Cambridge Chaucer Companion*.¹ The work of Nick Havely has been similarly influential, including his *Chaucer's Boccaccio: Sources for Troilus and the Knight's and Franklin's Tales* and his more recent monograph, *Dante's British Public: Texts and Readers from the Fourteenth Century to the Present*, which extends the analysis well beyond the medieval period.² Crucial also has been the contribution of David Wallace, whose ability to trace connections across languages and cultures is exemplified in his *Chaucer and the Early Writings of Boccaccio* as well as his later works.³

¹ P. Boitani, *English Medieval Narrative in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 1982); *Chaucer and the Italian Trecento*, ed. P. Boitani (Cambridge, 1983); *The Cambridge Companion to Chaucer*, ed. P. Boitani and J. Mann, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2003).

² N. R. Havely, *Chaucer's Boccaccio: Sources for Troilus and the Knight's and Franklin's Tales* (Cambridge, 1980); N. R. Havely, *Dante's British Public: Readers and Texts, from the Fourteenth Century to the Present* (Oxford, 2014).

³ D. Wallace, *Chaucer and the Early Writings of Boccaccio* (Cambridge, 1985).

Introduction

Despite the wealth of studies in this field, new and fresh approaches continue to be offered: we can think, for example, of Kenneth Clarke's *Chaucer and Italian Textualities*, which examines Chaucer's work through a focus on the Italian manuscripts which could have been available to him.⁴ The influence of Italian humanism on British culture, as we have said, has been the subject of a number of key studies: notable are Roberto Weiss's volume *Humanism in England during the Fifteenth Century*, Alessandra Petrina's *Machiavelli in the British Isles*, and more recently David Rundle's edited collection *Humanism in Fifteenth-Century Europe*.⁵

The chapters of this book break new ground in presenting a series of case studies which illuminate in detail some of the ways in which modes of thought and cultural practice travelled between the two countries. The rise of international trade, the growth of towns and cities in Britain and the politics of diplomacy all helped to foster connections between Britain and Italy, while the flourishing of Italian humanism from the late fourteenth century had a major impact on intellectual life and literary production in Britain. Each chapter presents a case study focusing on a specific group of texts or people, and the cohesive element throughout is the mobility of Italian culture and the impact of Italian modes of cultural practice on those of medieval Britain. An important task for the authors has been to look at the human dimension of these exchanges, and how ideas and practices were connected to lives of men and women of very different social standings. Ideas, as the Italian politician Pietro Nenni used to say, walk on the legs of human beings ('le idee camminano sulle gambe degli uomini').

This book also shows how encounters between Italian and British scholars could happen on soils other than those of Britain or the Italian peninsula: Carolyn Collette's chapter, stressing the pivotal role of a religious and intellectual centre such as Avignon for the meeting between Richard de Bury and Petrarch, evokes the European and even global dimension in which these encounters took place. In Avignon, Richard de Bury and Petrarch discovered their mutual love of books and learning. They shared an interest in the rediscovery of ancient texts and a common commitment to melding Christian and classical thought. Richard de Bury brought these interests into the court of Edward III, where Chaucer would later use some of the same tropes as Richard de Bury employs in his *Philobiblon*.

⁴ K. P. Clarke, *Chaucer and Italian Textualities* (Oxford, 2011).

⁵ R. Weiss, *Humanism in England during the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1941); A. Petrina, *Machiavelli in the British Isles: Two Early Modern Translations of The Prince* (Farnham, 2009); *Humanism in Fifteenth-Century Europe*, ed. D. G. Rundle (Oxford, 2012).

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This book also opens up fruitful comparisons between Italy and the British Isles with regard to topics which scholars of British–Italian interactions have not often considered. An example is the study of urban identities in the context of urban histories in medieval England and the influence of Italian classical examples, as analysed by Helen Fulton in her chapter. Fulton proposes a redefinition of what urban history was and what form it took in medieval Britain. She argues that there has in fact been a continuous, if diverse, tradition of urban history from Bede to the modern period. In presenting the evidence for this continuous tradition, her chapter takes a new look at the influence of classical and Italian urban historical genres on British writing, particularly the genre of chorography, which is considered here as a form of urban history. She points out that administrative innovations also travelled outwards from the more developed Italian urban centres. Fulton concludes that Italian and British urban histories show many similarities: ‘Both the British and Italian models of urban history articulated a political ideology regarding the importance of individual towns and cities within a larger organizational structure of state or nation and the vitality of their physical presence as evidence of an ancient Roman past.’

This common interest in the Roman past emerged in different genres. Other geographical texts and also maps could show this common interest in classical antiquity. This is one of the key points of Margaret Bridges’s chapter on the *Polychronicon* and its translations. As Bridges writes, ‘This compendious work engages with Italy as the home of Latinity and a storehouse of literary writings, classical and Christian, without which there could be no historical knowledge.’ Among the additions Ranulph Higden made to his intermediate version of the *Polychronicon* was a *mappa mundi*, usually inserted between his third prologue (I, 4) and his *De orbis dimensione & de orbis divisione & de partium orbis descriptione* (I, 5). These maps are but one of several ways in which the *Polychronicon* evokes the place-names of the stage on which his histories unfold. The ‘Higden maps’ survive only as conspicuous blanks in manuscripts of Trevisa’s translation of the *Polychronicon*, present *in absentia*. Similarly, the initial descriptions of the parts of the world, though not lacking in etymologized and historicized names of cities, provinces and rivers, hardly yield information about the compiler’s and the translators’ attitudes towards ‘the noblest province of all Europe’ (I, 23). It is, however, when engaged in storytelling that the authors, translators and continuators of the *Polychronicon* are most likely to reveal the resonances for them of the places that were reduced to mere blanks or borrowings in the initial geographical and textual descriptions.

Another field in which there is much space for further research is the connection between theological and spiritual developments in the

two regions. An example of this is the diffusion of Joachimism, which deeply influenced Franciscan thought. Research on this field has been limited, making Victoria Flood's contribution a welcome new perspective.⁶ Flood's chapter focuses on the political influence of Joachimism: she reminds us that the threads which we are trying to follow can lead in unexpected directions, and we therefore need to study relationships and exchanges always within an interdisciplinary framework.

A number of chapters in the book offer fresh perspectives on commerce, trade, and financial exchanges between Italy and the British Isles. This is not, of course, a completely new field: important studies on the economic connections between the two areas already exist.⁷ However, our book also explores the social dimension of these exchanges, showing how commercial contacts could foster cultural exchanges. As Helen Bradley writes, an 'entirely different dimension of contact between cultures [...] arises from trade, and considering this other dimension necessitates expanding our view to accommodate a wider community and, to match it, a wider sense of what we imagine "culture" to be'. Trade compels people who speak different languages and share few social practices to live side by side. In the later Middle Ages, commerce was based on personal relations and repeat business among friends. Trade entailed a high degree of trust between parties: it was a social activity which implied complex cultural interaction. Literacy and numeracy played a major role; in Bradley's words, 'ordinary traders going about their business built a linguistic, economic and social interface between cultures'.

The integration of Italian merchants in English society occurred in different forms. As Bradley points out in her chapter, by the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries the business interests of Italian traders brought them into direct contact with Londoners of all sorts on a daily basis. As a consequence, while forming expatriate city-state

⁶ Earlier influential work includes M. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1993); and M. Reeves and M. W. Bloomfield, 'The Penetration of Joachimism into Northern Europe', *Speculum* 29 (1954), 772–93.

⁷ For example, R. W. Kaeuper, *Bankers to the Crown. The Riccardi of Lucca and Edward I* (Princeton, 1973); R. A. Goldthwaite, 'Italian Bankers in Medieval England', *Journal of European Economic History* 2 (1973), 763–71; M. Prestwich, 'Italian Merchants in Late Thirteenth- and Early Fourteenth-Century England', in *The Dawn of Modern Banking*, ed. R. S. Lopez (New Haven, 1979), pp. 77–104; E. B. Fryde, 'Italian Merchants in Medieval England, c. 1270–c. 1500', in *Aspetti della vita economica medievale* (Florence, 1985), pp. 215–31; *Lettere dei Riccardi di Lucca ai loro compagni in Inghilterra (1295–1303)*, ed. A. Castellani and I. Del Punta (Rome, 2005); *Accounts of the English Crown with Italian Merchant Societies, 1272–1345*, ed. A. R. Bell, C. Brooks and T. K. Moore (Chippenhams, 2009).

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communities and keeping in touch with home, Italians readily integrated into London's socio-economic structures. Some held grants of denization which made them Englishmen. Anglo-Italian contact was far more than a meeting of two nations: aliens from other regions of Europe, such as Albanians, Croatians, Greeks and Rumanians, were also based in London as a commercial centre. Italian trade in London therefore created a meeting point for many different cultures and languages.

The activities of the Italians in the British Isles were intrinsically connected with the activities of their companies and families in Italy, as shown by Bart Lambert. This means that to understand these activities on British soil we also need to look at archives and records in Italy. Contemporary observers of the Italian presence in late medieval England – those who considered the influx of alien competitors as a threat to their own commercial interests in particular – often narrowed their perspective to the rich Lombard merchants and bankers in London, who, in their view, deprived the realm of its essential monetary resources by offering expensive luxuries and buying nothing in return. However, Italian communities in other English towns were more diverse, both socially and professionally. Every commercial season, Venetian galleys and other Italian vessels unloaded on English quays not only their cargoes of silks, alum and spices, but also shipping crews of up to three hundred men each. Some of these visitors were of much humbler origins than the merchants and bankers. During their stay in the realm, many lodged with English hosts, leaving a mark on the daily life of English communities. Italians of different origins worked side by side with Englishmen but also with other foreigners, such as Flemings.

Taking a different approach, Ignazio Del Punta points to the necessity of looking at commercial and financial connections in their broader European (or even extra-European) context. Such contacts flourished in the medieval period, as now, in a 'global' context, and therefore we cannot isolate the Italian-British axis from this broader geography. Powerful monarchs, the papacy, aristocrats, both lay and ecclesiastical, and bankers often entered into complex networks of exchange and into delicate but substantial financial transactions. Around the business networks built by the most affluent merchant-banking organizations money circulated comparatively fast and easily: for example through the use of current accounts, very similar to modern ones, with overdraft facilities, and through offsetting and balance transfers. Credit was very common, even at a low interest rate which applied to a kind of 'corporate loans' system of inter-bank lending among the business community itself. By the second half of the thirteenth century, the Italian operators had developed refined financial techniques, including the use of 'bills

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of exchange' (*instrumenta ex causa cambii*): in coming into contact with the Italians, the British also came in touch with these complex financial techniques.

Del Punta also shows how these economic and financial contacts need to be investigated in concert with their political dimension. Both in England and in southern Italy the growth of fiscal income and the facilities provided by efficient international banking companies fostered speculative spirals. Political turmoil and military defeats had a major influence on the financial position of monarchs and nobles: Edward III, for example, was unable to repay his debts to the Bardi and Peruzzi, leading to the collapse of their banks.

Ideas 'walk' not only 'on the legs of men', but also by means of objects that move: among these we can consider manuscripts as some of the most important medieval artefacts for the transmission of ideas. Manuscripts were transmitted and moved around by individuals, many of them known to us, as I show in my own chapter, on the Italian manuscripts of John Neuton. In his will of 1414, this treasurer of York Minster left to the library of the Minster and to the college of Peterhouse in Cambridge several works by Italian jurists and political thinkers. Among the surviving manuscripts of his bequest we find works by specialists in Roman law, namely Cino da Pistoia and Bartolus de Saxoferrato, whose commentaries on different parts of the *Corpus iuris civilis*, the compilation of Roman Law assembled under the emperor Justinian, were both radical and influential. How would these works have been read in a city of great political significance like York, in a period which saw the unsuccessful rebellion of Archbishop Scrope in 1405? My chapter shows how, in studying the connections between the British Isles and Italy in the late Middle Ages, we should shift part of our attention from the 'centre' (London, the court) to other civic and religious realities of medieval Britain. Clerics like Scrope and Neuton in Britain were able to develop their own connections with productive Italian cultural centres and establish a fruitful cultural exchange with these.

It is worth mentioning other examples of Neuton's attention to Italian cultural developments. He also possessed among his manuscripts a copy of the *Historia destructionis Troiae* ('The History of the Destruction of Troy') written by the Sicilian Guido delle Colonne in 1287. This Latin work, based on the French Troy romance by Benoît de Sainte-Maure, tells the story of the Trojan War from a different perspective to that of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Its influence on English literature was great: Lydgate's *Troy Book* is based on it and Chaucer himself honours the Sicilian writer by mentioning him in the *House of Fame* and the *Legend of Good Women*. We can add that we read in Neuton's will that he also possessed a copy

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of Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortunae* (a very popular work of the Italian writer). Late medieval York was evidently well connected with cultural developments in the rest of Europe.

The recent literary history of Europe in the period after the Black Death edited by David Wallace has shown how productive it is to look at connections and exchanges across different itineraries: European cultures do not travel only from one capital city to another but via numerous lesser-known pathways.⁸ We hope that this book will contribute to and stimulate research in a wide range of areas related to cultural contacts and exchange in the Middle Ages. I would like to conclude this short introduction by stressing that cultural exchanges should be analysed in both directions. Italian culture was a driving force of late medieval Europe; at the same time, important developments in Britain deeply influenced Italian culture and society: for example, the scientific and philosophical theories developed by authors such as Roger Bacon and William of Ockham, whose philosophy played an important role in intellectual developments in late medieval Italy.⁹ Studies in these fields could be multiplied. There is still much work ahead.

⁸ *Europe: A Literary History, 1348–1418*, ed. D Wallace, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2016).

⁹ English logic had for example a deep impact on Italian philosophy: see *English Logic in Italy in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries: Acts of the 5th European Symposium on Medieval Logic and Semantics, Rome, 10–14 November 1980*, ed. A. Maierù (Naples, 1982). On the influence of Ockham, see J. Monfasani, 'Aristotelians, Platonists, and the Missing Ockhamists: Philosophical Liberty in Pre-Reformation Italy', *Renaissance Quarterly* 46 (1993), 247–76.

Writing, Translating and Imagining Italy in the *Polychronicon*

Margaret Bridges

In the last two decades, scholarship has taken the Latin *Polychronicon* out of the cobwebs, reflecting on its historiographical geography and materialist history in the light of such concepts as transnational, national and local identities. In the course of these reflections, as well as in recent genre-focused studies of the place of antiquity in universal history, the *Polychronicon*'s visual and verbal representations of Rome – especially as they relate to Britain – have played a non-negligible part. While I am indebted to many of the insights provided by these studies, what I propose here is both more straightforward and more ambitious: I wish to explore and reflect on the *Polychronicon*'s cartographic, chorographic and historiographical space of an 'Italy' that is inclusive of, but also in excess of, Rome. Since the near ubiquity of this space precludes exhaustiveness, I will focus on some of its recurring features that may help us assess the place of Italy in the historico-geographical imaginary at a time when the island of Britain is already linked to the Italian peninsula by commercial and mercenary activity, but the works of the great *trecento* authors have yet to make an impact on English literature.

The 'writers' of the *Polychronicon* were multiple, and for the purposes of this study can be defined as three: the Chester Benedictine Ranulph Higden, as he revisited and revised an earlier version of his work at some time in the 1350s; John Trevisa, as he worked on his translation for Thomas Berkeley in 1385–87; and the unknown translator behind the only extant manuscript of his work in London, British Library (BL), MS Harley 2261 (c. 1475). Widely circulated, prolifically copied and continued, before and after being translated, the Latin *Polychronicon* can hardly be apprehended in all its variant versions, so there is little alternative but to refer to the edition by C. Babington and J. R. Lumby, which collates five Latin manuscripts and includes the two English translations.¹

¹ *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis, Together with the English Translations of John of Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century*,

When using the term *Polychronicon* in what follows, I will essentially be referring to features of the text that are common to author and translators, whose distinct voices will be referred to as those of Higden (for the writer), Ranulph (when signing additions under his initial R), Trevisa, and Harley 2261.

The difficulties of discussing an 'English' *Polychronicon* which might be independent of its Latin exemplar (which is of course also 'English') should become self-evident in the following pages.² Nevertheless, it is worth recalling the implications of the paratexts constituted by the colophon to Trevisa's translation, his dedicatory Epistle and *The Dialogue between the Lord and the Clerk*. Whatever other purposes the staging of himself as a reluctant translator may have had,³ it also served, however ironically, to emphasize the distance separating the vernacular product (of uncertain or challenged legitimacy) not just from its authoritative Latin source but also from its translator. For Trevisa, at least, this move had the advantage of signalling that his text is a product neither of his 'making' nor of his desire. And, lest we forget these paratexts, he will intervene often enough *in propria persona* to disagree with positions taken up by the Latin text. It would clearly be problematic to attribute to this translator the various configurations of Italy in his *Polychronicon*. The fifteenth-century translator seems to be absent from his own vernacular production, which we must perforce assume that Harley 2261 reflects, so that his frequent omissions and rare shifts of emphasis can only be interpreted at the reader's own risk. It is a risk that I will occasionally be taking.

As it was available to his English translators, Higden's text covered events up to the year 1342. Trevisa provided a brief continuation (just over two folios) ending with the treaty of Bretigny in 1360, while fifty-five folios of Harley 2261 continue events up to 1401. The closer the *Polychronicon* gets to its writers' present, the rarer do its glimpses of

ed. C. Babington and J. R. Lumby, 9 vols., Rolls Series 41 (London, 1865–86). All references to the Latin and most references to the two English translations of the *Polychronicon* are to this edition, cited by book and chapter number, followed (for quotations) by a reference in brackets to the volume and page number. For Trevisa's sixth book, references are to *John Trevisa's Translation of the Polychronicon of Ranulph Higden, Book VI*, ed. R. A. Waldron (Heidelberg, 2004).

² Higden's Latin work is English in the complex ways that are explored in the writings of Andrew Galloway, Kathy Lavezzo and Peter Brown, quoted below.

³ For example, foregrounding his patron's disinterested desire – since he himself understands Latin – to make texts of clerical learning available to the laity. For a convenient edition of and introduction to these paratexts, see *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory 1280–1520*, ed. J. Wogan-Browne, N. Watson, A. Taylor and R. Evans (Exeter, 1999), pp. 130–8.

Italy become. The papacy has moved to Avignon and the ambitions of Edward III take him back and forth between England, Scotland, Flanders and France. For a number of reasons, relating in part to the altered morphology of the work as it changes from a universal history with its sense of an ending into an open-ended annalistic English chronicle, but also in part to the perceived diminishing relevance of Rome to England,⁴ the continuations (including that of Caxton) will receive only occasional mention in the following pages.

A cartographic depiction of the world, complementing both the initial geographic and ethnographic description of the world in Book I as well as the following historical narratives, was one of several additions made by Higden in the 1340s to an earlier version of his *Polychronicon*.⁵ It is possible that fol. 4v of San Marino, Huntington Library, MS HM 132, almost certainly the autograph of a work in progress, was the map of the author's choice, though not of his making.⁶ Although its closest analogues are constituted by a group of English *mappae mundi* going back to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and, beyond them, to a late Roman model, its features are considered distinctive enough to warrant its designation as the 'Higden map'. As copies of the intermediate version of the *Polychronicon* proliferated in the wake of its immense success, the map too was reproduced, but of 135-odd manuscripts to have come down to us, only some twenty-one now have maps of the *oicumene*, sometimes as a frontispiece but more usually inserted either before or between the *dimensio*, the *divisio* and the *descriptio orbis* chapters of Book I.⁷ Whether the sketchy Huntington map represents the author's original choice or whether it is a simplification of a more detailed map has little bearing on this study, which looks at Italy in the complete range of Higden maps.

⁴ Harley 2261, for instance, says nothing of the filiation of Richard II's queen Anne to the Roman emperor (she is evoked as 'the suster of the kynge of Boemia', VII, 51 [Babington and Lumby, vol. 8, p. 460]).

⁵ For an outline of the process of revision leading to identification of a short, an intermediate and a long version, and the attribution of the map to the intermediate version, see J. Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford, 1966), pp. 89–109.

⁶ For the view that the larger map in BL, MS Royal 14 C IX comes closest to Higden's prototype, see M. Destombes, *Mappemondes, AD 1200–1500* (Amsterdam, 1964), p. 151, and, revising his earlier opinion, J. Taylor, 'Higden, Ranulf', in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition (Oxford, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com>.

⁷ These figures are from A. S. G. Edwards, 'Geography and Illustration and Higden's *Polychronicon*', in *Art into Life: Collected Papers from the Kresge Art Museum Medieval Symposia*, ed. C. G. Fischer and K. L. Scott (East Lansing MI, 1995), pp. 95–113 (p. 107, n. 4).

As world maps go, the Huntington map is a sober one, almost devoid of pictorial embellishments, sparing in its use of colour and of writing. It is profuse only in its focus 'on distinguishing national areas with looping lines and twisting borders that trace [...] a maze of border relations of nations'.⁸ Galloway's apt characterization of this map is valid for roughly half of the extant *Polychronicon* maps only, as seven mandorla-shaped *mappae mundi* figure just names and no boundaries. Furthermore, two maps differ considerably from all others; it is ironic that these singular maps have figured most prominently in recent assessments of their 'national' (English) biases. The map on fols. 1v–2r of BL, MS Royal 14 C IX, discussed below, has been perceived as underpinning the 'cosmopolitan nationalism' that figures England as at once marginal to, but yet the equal of, Rome.⁹ As for the late fourteenth century Evesham map (London, College of Arms, Muniment Room 18/19), which is indirectly associated with continuations of the *Polychronicon* rather than with Higden's work, it readily lends itself to characterization as an imperialistic artefact that foregrounds 'the territorial, dynastic and commercial aspects of English patriotism'.¹⁰ This map, in which Italy is dwarfed by symbols representing English possession (Calais) and aspiration (royal St Denis) in France, will not be further discussed here in view of its tenuous connection with Higden.

The mandorla maps inscribed within the Christian symbol of a *vesica piscis* ('fish-bladder') seem remarkable for their resistance to ideological interpretation, by refusing to offer a single point of view from which to read place names, which are slanted at different angles; by not dividing the world into spaces that might compete with one another, for example in terms of relative size; by not writing any one place name larger than another.¹¹ As far as I can judge, the single exception to this is constituted by the names of Paradise, Jerusalem and (usually) Rome, encased and legible along the horizontal axis of the page. Although a word for the Alps figures not far west of *Roma*, I cannot so much as discern the name *Italia*, let alone any of the toponyms elsewhere associated with the peninsula.

The majority of the *Polychronicon* maps, of the 'rounded oval' variety, tell an analogous tale, in which Italy's near vacant space coincides with

⁸ A. Galloway, 'Latin England', in *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*, ed. K. Lavezzo (Minneapolis, 2004), pp. 41–95 (p. 52).

⁹ See K. Lavezzo, *Angels on the Edge of the World: Geography, Literature and English Community, 1000–1534* (Ithaca, 2006), pp. 71–92.

¹⁰ See P. Barber, 'The Evesham World Map: A Late Medieval English View of God and the World', *Imago Mundi* 47 (1995), 13–33 (p. 13 for the quote, p. 14 for the map).

¹¹ For descriptions of these maps, see Destombes, *Mappemondes*, pp. 152–60.

Rome's privileged place. Within its natural confines (spelled out as the *Alpes* and the river *Rodanus*; the Mediterranean is not named) and its curved borders (with *Istria* and *Pannonia*), the peninsula designated as *Italia* in Huntington HM 132 figures a space devoid of provinces or towns, with the single exception of Rome.¹² The red rectangle around *Roma* seems significant only with regard to the pattern that it forms together with Jerusalem, whose abbreviated name is enclosed within a crenellated box, and the framed picture of Adam and Eve's temptation in a red square, set against the circumambient Ocean at the top of the page, between *India* and *Oriens*. Although there can be no certainty about the sequence in which the eye reads the details on a world map, however much the cartographer's use of colour, relative size of text and image and reading habits may tend to steer the glance, these three *loci* in the Huntington map – and in its near double on fol. 2v in BL, MS Royal 14 C IX (see Fig. 1) – demand a top-to-bottom reading. After all, salvation history sees the deeds of postlapsarian humanity unfold from their beginning in paradise, through Christ's redemptive sacrifice in the world's centre, to a place and temporality in the European west called Rome.¹³

If maps always reflect the ideologies that inform their production, some do so more emphatically than others: the place of Italy in the Huntington map yields scant information about possible agendas other than the desire to preserve and propagate salvation history's appropriation of late classical cartography in copies of the works of encyclopedists and historiographers, from Orosius and Isidore to Honorius Augustodunensis and Matthew Paris. So it is not surprising that this 'Higden map' has been evoked largely in the dim light of its perceived shortcomings, which are in turn attributed to a general decline of cartographic consciousness in fourteenth-century England.¹⁴ In fact, the most

¹² This map can be consulted online: http://dpg.lib.berkeley.edu/webdb/dsheh/heh_br?Description=&CallNumber=HM+132 [accessed 20 August 2017], as can BL, MS Royal 14 C IX, fols. 1v–2r: <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminated-manuscripts/TourPopupMax.asp?TourID=439> [accessed 20 August 2017].

¹³ According to K. Miller, who was working with an old photograph of the manuscript, Rome is absent from the map in Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 33.4.12 (*Mappaemundi: Die ältesten Weltkarten*, 6 vols. [Stuttgart, 1895–8] III, 97). Its *Italia* is rectangular in shape and contains the names of Calabria, Campania (framed) and the Alps.

¹⁴ The failure to take into account recent cartographic developments and to include place-names of current relevance figures prominently among these perceived shortcomings. See e.g. A.-D. von den Brincken, 'Herausragende Plätze der antiken Geschichte im Bild der mittelalterlichen Ökumene-Karte (9. bis beginnendes 14. Jahrhundert)', in *Studien zur Universalkartographie des Mittelalters*, ed. T. Szabó (Göttingen, 2008), pp. 647–67 (pp. 658–9).

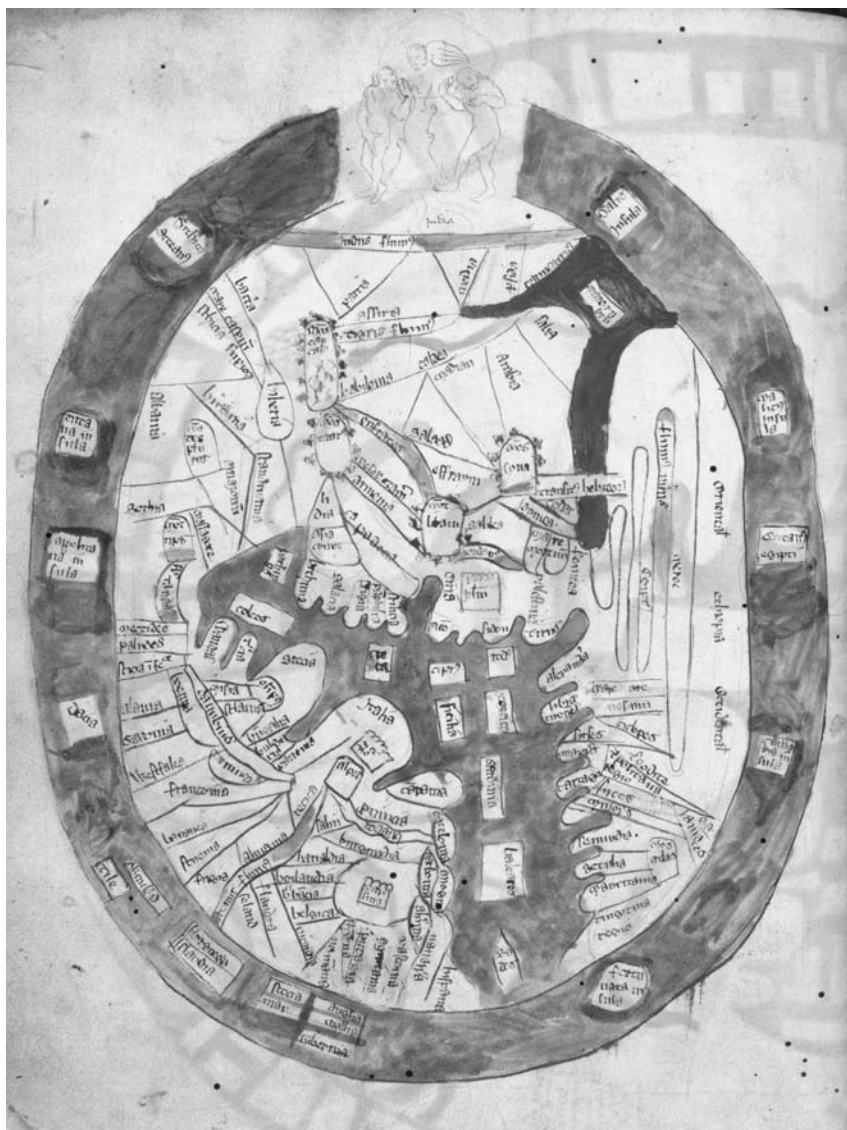


Fig. 1: *Mappa mundi* in a copy of Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon*.

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London, British Library, MS Royal 14 C ix, fol. 2v. Late fourteenth century.

challenging feature of this map might well be its restraint. Higden's presumed autograph contains the sparest diagram of *Italia*, which occupies a bulbous protrusion in the Mediterranean no larger than that of neighbouring Greece, and whose blanks were partly filled, in nine of its fourteenth- and fifteenth-century avatars, with no more than the names of Campania and sometimes Calabria. The maps diverge as to their understanding of Campania's relation to Italy, from which it is partly or completely separated geographically by an arm of the sea: in BL, MS Royal 14 C IX, fol. 2v, there is even an inland boundary closing off what looks like an independent 'province', occupying a peninsula of its own, while neighbouring *Prouincia* (today's Provence) is part of *Italia*.¹⁵

In addition to its simpler *mappa mundi* just evoked, BL, MS Royal 14 C IX has a large map that shows a predilection for vignettes, symbols and extensive legends across fols. 1v–2r. So much has been crammed into the space of Italy that its very name, *Ytalia* (now the first word of a *legenda* enumerating the country's provinces),¹⁶ is relegated to a narrow isthmus between the Danube and the Adriatic. The Italian peninsula contains not only a triple-spired church (*Roma Petri*) and tower vignettes (for the towns of *Neapolis*, *Brundision*, *Capua* and *Iauna* [for *Ianua*] – the latter two filling bulbous protrusions of their own), but also legends evoking the provinces of Calabria, Campania, Benevento, Tuscany, Emilia, Liguria and Lombardy. These legends, in which the cartographer positions himself as a reader of Higden's text, are densely packed within regional borders drawn in red ink. They inform us that 'Peter's Rome' (*Roma Petri*) is in Tuscany, that Naples is the chief town in Campania and that Brindisi is the capital of Apulia and the place where ships leave for the Holy Land.¹⁷ *Etruscia*, as an isolated name

¹⁵ In Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 89, we see the obverse: the peninsula occupied by Campania is part of Italy, which is separated from Provence by a border.

¹⁶ 'Ytalia habet prouincias uidelicet Calabrium Campaniam Beneuentanam Tusciam Emiliam Liguriam et Lumbardiam' ('Italy has the following provinces: Calabria, Campania, Benevento, Tuscany, Emilia, Liguria and Lombardy'). The outlines of Sicily and Sardinia, present on all oval *Polychronicon* maps, are also filled with legends in BL, MS Royal 14 C IX. These islands are not part of the description of Italy, where they are evoked together with other *insulae* in a later chapter. I will not be discussing them further here.

¹⁷ This legend is reminiscent of a text found alongside Otranto in the itinerary map attached to Matthew Paris's *Chronica maiora*. Paris's representation of *Italia* (in red letters, as is *Apulia*) in his idiosyncratic 'world' map is not without resemblance to the 'spare' *Italia* of the *Polychronicon*, even though it contains, in addition to Rome, the names of Venice, Milan, Bologna and Pisa, of greater current relevance than Higden's Italian place-names were to be a century later. It is however disproportionately large in relation to the rest of Europe. The map is reproduced in

and not part of a descriptive legend, completes this inventory of Italy's provinces and towns, all of which (except *Etruscia*) figure in Higden's chorographical description *De Italia* in I, 23 (citing an eighth-century source) and could have figured on a late-Roman map. For all its relative profusion, the space of Italy on this large map is obsolescent, remote from the world of experience and resistant to any but the most basic of Christian ideologies. Whatever attention may have been lavished on the here and now of bright red Anglia in fols. 1v–2r of BL, MS Royal 14 C IX, with its vignettes of fourteen cities,¹⁸ 'Ytalia' is unmistakably evoked in terms of a 'there' and 'then'. The Chester monk's emphasis on Italy's pastness and remoteness will also characterize his *descriptio orbis* and the *historia* proper.

Reflecting on the fate of this cartographic space in the English vernacular, one notes that the history of the transmission and translation of the Latin *Polychronicon* is also the history of the gradual disappearance of the world map: no cartographic space is provided for the stage of world history in manuscripts written after the mid-fifteenth century, and no extant manuscript of Trevisa's English *Polychronicon* contains a *mappa mundi*. It does not necessarily follow that the map was perceived as redundant or that it was absent from Trevisa's exemplar, for something like its memory, or the expectation that it will return, occasionally marks its presence *in absentia*, in both Latin and Middle English manuscripts.¹⁹ Caxton's 1482 print of Trevisa's *Polychronicon* leaves a complete blank page before the *De orbis dimensione* – a space for the map that one looks for in vain in later prints. This loss might be thought of as a side effect of the transmission to the laity of a category of knowledge (here, geographical) that was once the preserve of the clergy. In this connection it could be significant that John Trevisa felt the need to add an explanatory gloss (unmarked as such) on what the description of a *mappa mundi* might involve.²⁰

D. K. Connolly, *The Maps of Matthew Paris: Medieval Journeys through Space, Time and Liturgy* (Woodbridge, 2009), colour plate II.

¹⁸ The cities of Anglia listed in Lavezzo, *Angels*, p.166, n. 2, only allow us to speak of a very general 'here' (from which e.g. Higden's Chester is absent) and a qualified 'now'.

¹⁹ Descriptions of one Latin and three English manuscripts leaving spaces for a map are found in Waldron, *Trevisa's Translation*, pp. xxiii–xxviii.

²⁰ Translating Higden's reference (in I, 3) to the work of his first book as a (verbal) description of the *mappa mundi*, Trevisa evokes a 'general, comoun and special' process involving an artefact 'purtrayed and i-peynt' ('portrayed and painted'), 'þat is þe cloþe þat þe schap of þe worlde wide is i-peynted ynne' ('that is, the canvas on which the shape of the whole world is painted') (Babington and Lumby, vol. 1, p. 27). In other words, he is imagining the transformation of a visual artefact into a verbal one.

For the anonymous early fifteenth century translator behind Harley 2261, the act of describing the *mappa mundi* does not seem to be in need of explanation. Whether or not we agree with Taylor's conjecture that he was a layman,²¹ the manuscript itself (which is not a holograph) presents an intriguing mode of cartographic presence: even if the map as such is absent, toponyms accompanied by rudimentary cartographic symbols emerge in the marginal spaces of the *De orbis descriptione*.²² The *oicumene* has been taken apart and its fragments subjected to a sequential reading that coincides with the *Polychronicon*'s geographical description, beginning with *Assyria* in Asia all the way to *Scocia* in Europe, with roughly ninety places figuring in between, including *Ytalia*, *Apulea* and *Campania* (all three encased in red triangles; see Fig. 2). Although more names for provinces, cities and topographical features of 'the cuntre of ytaly' are spelled out in the corresponding chorography, the restriction of marginal cartographic symbols on fol. 37r to these two provinces recalls not only the spare cartographic space occupied by Italy on the majority of *Polychronicon* maps but also the peculiar emphases of the verbal description.²³ If the translator, rubricator or scribe of Harley 2261 has hardly invented his cartographic subject in general, and that of Italy in particular, he may be said to have reinvented the mode of its deployment in the historical geography of the *Polychronicon*.

Although the act of describing the world was first and foremost a matter of rewriting and compiling previous *descriptiones*, the compiler of the *Polychronicon* had his ways of 'making the words [his] own'. Three chapters in the chorographic first book are devoted to the description of Italy (chapter 23), of Rome (24) and of Roman institutions and customs (25). In his chapter on the 'noblest prouince of al Europa',²⁴

²¹ Taylor, *Universal Chronicle*, p. 140.

²² The marginal toponyms are in Latin (e.g. 'Ytalia') whereas their counterparts in the text are generally in the vernacular equivalents ('Ytaly') – where such equivalents exist, which is not the case for the Italian provinces concerned. See further M. Bridges, 'Spaces for Alexander in Book I of the Fifteenth-Century English *Polychronicon*', British Library, Harley MS 2261, in *Alexandre le Grand à la lumière des manuscrits et des premiers imprimés en Europe (XII^e–XVI^e siècle)*, ed. C. Gaullier-Bougassas (Turnhout, 2015), pp. 451–74 (pp. 453–60).

²³ The lack of a symbol for Rome is not the only remarkable absence in the margins of Harley 2261: after Scotland, all marginal traces of a map cease, leaving the elaborate descriptions of Wales and of Britain without any form of cartographic presence whatsoever. The very places to which the *descriptio* devotes 'inordinate attention' (Lavezzo, *Angels*, p. 73) are here reduced to cartographic blanks.

²⁴ Trevisa's translation of Higden's 'totius Europae insignior provincia' (Babington and Lumby, vol. 1, p. 198). We note here the flexibility of the term 'province', discussed below.

Higden clearly signals that he is rewriting previous descriptions of the Italian peninsula by citing authorities for its changing names and its beneficial waters (Isidore), the Alpine river Novanus/Novacius (Pliny) and the seven provinces of Calabria, Campania, Benevento, Tuscany, Emilia, Liguria and Lombardy (Paul the Deacon).²⁵ His references are only partly 'reliable': the writings of Pliny and Isidore indeed inform – sometimes verbatim – Higden's Italian geography, just as Paul's *Historia langobardorum* provides the details for the concluding section of this chapter. But references to these *auctores* are also misleading in the sense that nothing taken over from their writings was not also included in the thirteenth-century compendious compilations of Bartholomaeus Anglicus and Vincent of Beauvais,²⁶ who remain unacknowledged here, although their works alone account for several features of Higden's Italy, such as his privileging of Apulia and Campania, which receive special mention both in Vincent's *Speculum historiale* (II, 74)²⁷ and, with greater emphasis and enthusiasm, in Bartholomaeus's *De proprietatibus rerum* (XV, 14 and 38).²⁸

In Bartholomaeus, Apulia is evoked in terms of its dense population, affluence, abundant oil and wine, admirably fortified buildings and towns, beneficial hot springs and fertile soil; its principal city, *Brundisium* (Brindisi), is given an etymology explicitly derived from Isidore, relating to the shape (a deer's head) in which it was built by its Greek founders. Of these local features, Higden leaves out the references to this province's affluence, fortifications and fertility, while he adds to Brindisi the observation that people set sail here for the Holy

²⁵ In *Historia langobardorum*, Paul described no less than fifteen provinces (only four of which are named in the *Polychronicon*) in addition to fifty-five towns, compared with Higden's five. See Paul the Deacon, *Historia langobardorum*, ed. L. Bethmann and G. Waitz (Hanover, 1878), II, 15–24; *History of the Langobards by Paul the Deacon*, trans. W. Foulke (Philadelphia, 1907).

²⁶ Vincent's name (as the author of the *Speculum historiale*) appears in the introductory list of authorities, from which, intriguingly, Bartholomaeus's name is absent.

²⁷ References are to book and chapter numbers in Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum historiale*, in *Speculum quadruplex sive Speculum maius*, 4 vols. (Douai, 1624; rpt. Graz, 1965), IV.

²⁸ In the alphabetically arranged chapters of his fifteenth book, *Liber de terra et eius partibus*, Bartholomaeus had separate descriptions of Apulia, Campania, Italy, the Roman empire, Tuscany and Venice. See Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* (Frankfurt, 1601; rpt. Frankfurt, 1964), XV, 624–714. The Italian sections of the Latin text have been edited by W. Lampen, 'L'Italia nel pensiero di Fra Bartolomeo Anglico OFM', *Studi Francescani* 14 (1928), 111–18. For the purposes of this chapter, I am using the book and chapter numbering of the edition of the Middle English text, *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus De proprietatibus rerum*, ed. M. C. Seymour, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1975–88).

Land²⁹ – an observation that is not included in the fifteenth-century translation of Harley 2261, which also omits the reference to Apulia's 'hot welles and holsom' (Trevisa, I, 23).³⁰ Looking ahead to the historical books, Apulia will indeed be evoked repeatedly as the place where men and relics transit on their way to and from crusader territory.³¹ It is also associated with battle, defeat and death (in pre-imperial Rome and under the Holy Roman emperors).³² Finally, it is twice associated with the wondrous, in the form of an enigmatic object inscribed with a riddle that only a 'Saracen' can solve (in VI, 26) and as the site of the mysterious metamorphosis of Diomedes' companions into birds that behave hospitably towards Greeks but with hostility towards non-Greeks (II, 25). The salient feature of this Apulian metamorphosis is that it triggers a long discussion about authenticity versus fictitiousness, involving arguments based on parallels in classical literature and on Augustinian exegesis. This propensity of the *Polychronicon* to associate Italian places with inscriptions, literature and literary 'theory' is something that we shall be seeing more of below. Typically, the only other occasion on which the Apulian city of Brindisi will be named is in connection with the death of 'Virgilius Maro, the poette Mantuan' (Harley 2261).³³

As for the description of Campania, the other Italian province singled out in this chapter of the *Polychronicon*, it retains most of the superlatives found in its thirteenth-century source. References to the fertility of the land and its abundant produce are however subordinated to the praise of its renowned cities, the most famous of which is the metropolis Capua, whose name had been associated paronomastically with *capacitas* since Isidore. Higden's *capacitas sufficientiae*, referring to the city's capacity for storing life-sustaining produce, becomes 'ablenessse to fonge and take' ('ability to collect and hold') in Trevisa, and more literally 'capacite of sufficiaunce' in Harley 2261. Capua is said to be surpassed in greatness only by Rome and by Carthage – two cities that, like Capua itself, had long been only shadows of their former glorious selves when Higden was writing. After migration-age and later ravages, the city that in antiquity was proverbial for luxury and *luxuria* was integrated with the kingdom of Sicily in the twelfth century, never to regain its former

²⁹ This is a rare instance of an Italian place-name being used with what could be perceived as current relevance. We have seen the corresponding legend on the world map of BL, MS Royal 14 C IX; cf. p. 13 and n. 17 above.

³⁰ Trevisa's well-documented interest in thermal baths leads him elsewhere in this chorographical book to compare their relative merits from personal experience (I, 47).

³¹ VII, 5; VII, 7; VII, 12.

³² III, 25; III, 33; III, 40; VII, 4; VII, 24; VII, 32; VII, 33.

³³ III, 44 (Babington and Lumby, vol. 4, p. 241).

glory. In V, 2, the *Polychronicon* in fact records the destruction of Capua by the Vandals on their way to Carthage, juxtaposing the event with the arrival of Hengist and Horsa in fifth-century England. In rewriting and in translation, Campania's cities of Naples (which, like Brindisi, will be associated with the inscription on Virgil's tomb) and Pozzuoli (*Puteoli*, associated with Virgil's baths)³⁴ lose some of the glory in which they had basked in Trevisa's translation of the *De proprietatibus* ('many other citees, famouse, riche and ful of men [. . .] as Neapolis and Peuteolis').³⁵ It is characteristic that their connection with Virgil plays a major role in determining whether, when and how they will be redeployed in the historical narrative.

Finally, in this chorographic chapter Ranulph the compiler and Trevisa the translator both draw attention to what seem to be two minor additions to the sources they are rewriting. The former signs a passage that serves as a transition to the description of the extensive province of *Lombardia*, taking the form of a list of conquerors and colonizers of 'that cuntre of Ytaly [that] hathe be possessede of diuerse peple and naciones'.³⁶ These range from the so-called 'Greeks' (Janus, Saturn, Italus), Trojans (Aeneas), 'Frenchmen' (Brennus), the Goths, Huns and Vandals, to the Longobards, whose leaders are named one by one in the migration story occupying the concluding third of the chapter *De Italia*. Trevisa in turn marks as 'his' a passage etymologizing the name for the Apennines in an interesting variant or misprision of earlier etymologies (Isidore, Paul the Deacon)³⁷ that bring Hannibal and his Phoenicians into the picture:

Trevisa. Alpes Appennini þat beep Penitus his hilles. Hanibal was a grete duke and hiȝte Penitus also, and wente by Alpes to Rome: þerfore of the tweie names Alpes and Penitus is þat oon name schortliche i-made Appennini [. . .]. (Babington and Lumby, vol. 1, p. 201)

He will repeat this etymology once more, adding it to Higden's story of Hannibal crossing the Alps during the second Punic war (III, 33).

³⁴ These baths are simply taken over from Bartholomaeus's description of Pozzuoli in *De proprietatibus*, XV, 38. Nothing more is said of them or of Pozzuoli itself in subsequent books of the *Polychronicon*.

³⁵ Trevisa's translation of the epithets for Naples and Pozzuoli in *De proprietatibus*, XV, 38 (pp. 746–7). Compare Higden's *urbes famosae* to Trevisa's 'noble citees and famous' and the fifteenth-century translator's unelaborated 'cites callede Neapolis and Puteoli' (Babington and Lumby, vol. 1, pp. 200–3).

³⁶ Harley 2261 (Babington and Lumby, vol. 1, p. 203), translating Ranulph's 'Italia a variis vicissim possessa est gentibus' (vol 1, p. 202).

³⁷ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911), XV, 8; *Historia langobardorum*, II, 18.

That crossing is followed by Hannibal's seemingly endless series of victories over the Romans (under Scipio, Sempronius, Flaminius, Fabius Maximus, Lucius Emilius Publius, Paulus, Terrencius and Varro – so the list continues), leading to the conclusion that there can be 'no doute þo hadde i-be þe laste day of the state of Rome, 3if Hanibal cowþe as wel use þe victorie as he couþe wynne it yn fiztinge' (Babington and Lumby, vol. 4, p. 59).³⁸

Whatever semantics Trevisa may have associated with Hannibal's unlikely sobriquet ('Penitus', where his sources refer to 'Alpes Poeninae' and 'Punicis'), he has raised the spectre of invasion and defeat by reinscribing the name of Rome's conqueror into the Italian mountain range. In an addition to III, 34 by Ranulph, quoting Orosius, Hannibal's death will coincide with a volcanic island emerging from the ocean, turning him into a feature of Sicilian topography. For both compiler and translator, Italian toponyms evoke a distant past and foreign clime both great and glorious, to be sure, but also transitory and vulnerable. It is these very characteristics that guaranteed the pastness of Italy's past, while affording ample occasion for moralization (or 'presenting') – something that Higden rarely indulged in but that his fourteenth-century translator frequently could not resist in the *Polychronicon's* next chapter, devoted to the glory of *Tuscia*, of Italy and of Europe: the city of Rome.³⁹

The chapter *De urbe Roma* brings into the chorographical first book a shift in mode of writing and citing, in spite of an inauspicious opening that locates the city on the Tuscan hills by the Tiber and that represents its foundation as a conglomerate of settlements going back to a series of foreign founding fathers (such as Noah and sons, Saturn, Italus, Evander) whose several jostling 'cities' were merged when Romulus built a circumambient wall. In addition to citing Martinus Polonus (for Rome's magnitude, founding history and layout) and Livy (correlating moral decadence and excellence with wealth and its absence), Higden cites as one of his *auctores* Magister Gregorius, the otherwise unknown

³⁸ His suppression in the next chapter (*De urbe Romae*) of Gregorius's apocryphal narrative about Hannibal's suicide following his defeat by Scipio could be construed as further evidence that Higden's Italy is emphatically marked by the Phoenician. Compare *Polychronicon* I, 24 with chapter 26 of *Magister Gregorius (12^e ou 13^e siècle): Narracio de mirabilibus urbis Romae*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, *Textus Minores* 42 (Leiden, 1970). I shall be referring throughout to this edition of Gregorius's *Narracio* by chapter number.

³⁹ This city is the exclusive focus of the *Polychronicon's* 'Tuscia', in spite of the fact that Bartholomaeus's description of that extensive province had included e.g. Pisa, Siena, Lucca, Florence, Arezzo, Tortona, Perugia, Assisi, Spoleto, Ancona, Milan and Padua.

author of a (probably English) scholar's impressions of the city.⁴⁰ Gregorius's *Narracio de mirabilibus urbis Romae* (henceforth *Narracio*), preserved in a single late thirteenth century manuscript and (partly) in the *Polychronicon*, is one of several twelfth-century texts perceived as having participated in the rediscovery of classical antiquity through their interest in the tangible remains of Rome.⁴¹ Since Martinus's *Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum* had included in its opening book selections from another twelfth-century version of the Roman *mirabilia*, Higden's decision to resort for the bulk of chapter 24 to a comparable but less well-known text shows him following the lead of a well-established *auctor* yet confidently exercising a compiler's prerogative to select the *mirabilia* of his choice. Whether or not one believes this choice to be prompted by Gregorius's secular enthusiasm for and not uncritical response to the topography of the *Caput mundi*, I suggest we take a closer look at the presence of his work in this chapter of the *Polychronicon* as well as at some of the features of rewriting and translating.

The new note struck in the twenty-fourth chapter of the *Polychronicon* is not limited to quasi-aesthetic awe at the spectacle of Rome's still admirable yet ravaged sites, although this reaction is one of the sensations expressed. Gregorius had resorted to a panoply of emotional terms to relate his experience of compelling beauty (the marvellously lifelike statue of Venus exercised such a magical attraction that he could not resist returning to see 'her' three times), his resentment at the destruction of Rome's monuments, and his aversion to pungent smells (the sulphur baths that he turned away from although he had already paid his entrance fee); but once the first person of Gregorius's *Narracio* has become the authority informing Higden's compendium this panoply is reduced to tautologically characterizing the wonders of Rome as

⁴⁰ The author's eyewitness status has not been seriously challenged, although six of his 'Roman' sites seem to be derived from 'world' wonders in Pseudo-Bede's *De septem miraculis mundi*. See M. R. James, 'Magister Gregorius de Mirabilibus Urbis Romae', *EHR* 32 (1917), 531–54 (pp. 538–9).

⁴¹ R. Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1988), suggested that Gregorius's secular enthusiasm for and critical response to Roman ruins anticipated the Petrarchan humanist 'turn' of the fourteenth century better than did the writers of other *Mirabilia*: 'What interests Magister Gregorius is ancient, not Christian Rome' (p. 7). For the view that this misses the relative emphases of Petrarch's reflections on historical change prompted by the sight of Roman ruins, see J. Summit, 'Topography as Historiography: Petrarch, Chaucer and the Making of Medieval Rome', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30 (2000), 211–46. Petrarch's Letter to Colonna (*Familiars*, VI, 6), roughly contemporary with Higden's intermediate version of the *Polychronicon*, drew on a version of the *Mirabilia urbis Romae* (Summit, 'Topography as Historiography', p. 224).

wondrous. Wonder is an emotion triggered by excess: for all its generic 'tailoring' the *Polychronicon's* description of Rome yields a trove of material sites and objects that are marvellous for their excessive size, their exorbitant luxury and above all for their craftsmanship that exceeds the beholder's capacity to understand how they were made. Gregorius's Rome is constituted by sites that are at once over-determined and indeterminate; as such they appeal to the interpretative dilemmas so often foregrounded by Higden.⁴² Taking over and modifying the syntax of the *Narracio's* first chapter heading ('Incipit narratio de mirabilibus urbis Romae quae vel arte magica vel humano labore sunt condita'), Higden also opens up the description of late twelfth century Roman *mirabilia* to the question of their signification: 'Among þe wondres of þis citee þat 3it beep i-sene, it is greet wonder [. . .] where it were i-doo by wycheecraft oper by manis dede' (Babington and Lumby, vol. 1, p. 213).⁴³ Trevisa here amplifies the wondrous in the association of the *mirabilia* and *vestigia miranda* with the unanswerable question of whether they were fabricated by 'arte magica' (demonized as 'wycheecraft') or by 'humano labore' ('manis dede'), while it is typical of the translator of Harley 2261 that he takes the magic and sensationalism out of the *mirabilia* by omitting the question altogether.

One example will have to serve to indicate how Gregorius and Higden negotiate the challenge posed by Rome's over-determined monuments, notably designated by them both as 'signs'. In his sub-section *De statuīs et signis Romae* Higden cites Gregorius's description of the equestrian statue that used to be in the temple of Jupiter on the Capitolium but that had been violently dismantled ('deiecit' is the term used by both authors) and displaced, at first by St Gregory (who arranged for the pedestal consisting of four bronze pillars to be installed in the church of St John Lateran), then by the Roman population (which deposited horse and rider in front of the Pope's palace). The first conundrum associated with this uprooted and damaged object that has been forcefully transferred from a pagan to a Christian context concerns the identity (inhering in the name) of the rider: 'quem peregrini Theodericum, populus uero Romanus Constantinum dicunt, at cardinales et clerici Romane curie seu Marcum seu Quintum Quirinum appellant' (*Narracio*, 4). No less than four different names, then, were proposed by three groups of

⁴² In his first Preface, Higden (quoting Isidore) had compared the uncertainties regarding the builders of Rome to the insoluble equivocations in the historiographer's sources (I, 1).

⁴³ Not until III, 44 (Babington and Lumby, vol. 4, p. 245) do we learn that 'some' (including Huguccio of Pisa) attribute the building of two of the *mirabilia* (the house of as many statues as there are provinces, the Colosseum) to Virgil the magician.

'interpreters': the pilgrims ('peregrini') opting for Theoderic, the local population ('populus romanus') for Constantine and the cardinals and curial clergy ('cardinales et clerici Romane curie') divided between Marcus and Quintus Quirinus (Quintus Curtius in the *Polychronicon*).⁴⁴ Faced with these mutually exclusive interpretations, Gregorius rejects the idle fables of the pilgrims and the locals in favour of the most authoritative group of readers consisting of cardinals and clergy. His hardly unbiased decision has substantially contributed to the idea that the twelfth-century author was not 'lack[ing] some critical power'.⁴⁵

The author of the *Polychronicon* has chosen instead to maintain the conundrum by not reporting Gregorius's decision-making process. To be sure, even Gregorius's authorities have not been able to eliminate equivocation, but have only reduced the options – and the concomitant tales providing the equestrian statue with an etiology in the form of the heroic deeds of Marcus and Quintus Quirinus – to two. My point is that Higden's compendium is not an exclusive one, but one in which lies, fables and folklore may rub shoulders with other forms of meaning-making processes, even if their authority (in the sense of their intrinsic worth) is undermined by their designation as lies. This is not the only contribution to the marvels of Rome that is made by 'peregrini mendosi' (Trevisa's 'pilgrims ful of lesynges')⁴⁶ and in II, 25 the *Polychronicon* will explicitly reflect on the place of false lore not just in hearsay but also in the works of classical *auctores*. Perhaps it is the weight of the latter that causes the translator of Harley 2261 for once to resist suppressing an implausible subject and to concur with Higden's Pliny that 'truly there is noo lesenge, thau3he hit be of euidente apparicion of falsehenes, but hit hathe somme testimony and wittenesse'.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Since the sixteenth century the rider has been identified as Marcus Aurelius.

⁴⁵ Weiss, *Renaissance Discovery*, p. 7.

⁴⁶ See also the passage referring to the stone at the foot of Caesar's obelisk, under which liars say only a man free of sin can creep. Characteristically, Trevisa emphasizes (through repetition) the untruthfulness of this assertion, while the translator of Harley 2261 eliminates all reference to the stone and the properties that liars attribute to it. Another example of information culled from 'peregrini, qui semper frivolis abundant', whom Trevisa promotes to 'palmers þat fast con liȝe' and who are simply eliminated from the later Middle English translation, can be found in Babington and Lumby, vol. 1, pp. 224–5.

⁴⁷ Babington and Lumby, vol. 2, p. 423. Pliny was commenting on tales of werewolves (*Naturalis historia*, VII, 34), though Higden is led by the story of the shape-shifting companions of Diomedes to reflect on analogous fables in legend and literature. In II, 25 the translator of Harley 2261 tends not just to ignore the *vox populi*, but elides a number of Higden's *mirabilia* as well (glass and gilded walls of the Capitolium, golden statue of Jupiter, the baths of Beaneus Apollo, the suspended statue of Bellerophon, the aquaduct that supplies water to the whole city).

If the *Polychronicon*'s description of Rome inevitably foregrounds the equivocation inherent in wonder aroused by excess, or meaning in excess of what may be comprehended, this chapter is also marked by recurring heightened language that has recently been associated with compendious literature's generic tendency to excess: I refer to Higden's fourfold use of verse.⁴⁸ In the fourteenth century there was nothing particularly innovative about citing poetry in a prose encyclopedia or chronicle, as did many of Higden's *auctores* – most strikingly Vincent of Beauvais. The twelfth-century author of the *Narracio* had also been inspired by Roman marvels to burst into snippets of 'borrowed' song.⁴⁹ Of his nine verse citations, only two were taken over by Higden, although he probably believed that he was also citing Gregorius when concluding his twenty-fourth chapter with an incongruous polyphonic lyric on birdsong parading as a set of legal precepts inscribed on bronze tablets; he does, after all, rationalize the presence of this lyric by saying that the implicit meanings of its aphorisms in verse ('aphorismi metrici') can almost be understood ('quorum sententiae supplementum pene subintelligitur').⁵⁰

Irrespective of whether we share Emily Steiner's conviction that these five elegiac couplets show 'how medieval encyclopedias generate lyrics, their very drive to compendiousness producing language and form in excess of what use requires',⁵¹ there can be little doubt that they are literally in excess of Gregorius's *Narracio*. Since the only manuscript of this work ends abruptly after chapter 33 (mentioning but not citing the precepts), it seems reasonable to conclude that the poem was added to fill a space in the manuscript that served as Higden's exemplar.⁵² Be that as it may, the decision to include this lyric is less surprising when one considers Higden's willingness to engage with polysemy, enigmas and acrostics. Whereas Trevisa has transformed the five Latin couplets into five quatrains and into 'an artful and restrained' lyric,⁵³ the translator of Harley 2261 does not include the poem, which he may indeed have rejected on the grounds of it being extraneous to the subject at hand.

⁴⁸ There is also a one-line quotation from the *Aeneid*, referring to 'fader Evander' as the maker of Rome's towers (Babington and Lumby, vol. 1, pp. 208–9).

⁴⁹ *Narracio* 1 (twice), 6, 12, 19, 25, 29 (twice) and 31. These citations go back to Lucan, Ovid, Virgil and Hildebert.

⁵⁰ Babington and Lumby, vol. 1, p. 236.

⁵¹ E. Steiner, 'Compendious Genres: Higden, Trevisa and the Medieval Encyclopedia', *Exemplaria* 27 (2015), 73–92 (p. 87).

⁵² As hypothesized by James, 'Magister Gregorius', p. 533, and by Huygens, *Narracio*, p. 7. Interestingly, the point at which the *Narracio* is truncated is preceded by a description of statues of a sow (with piglets), a wolf and a ram – animals that could have led the scribe to think of Juveninus's bird-poem.

⁵³ Steiner, 'Compendious Genres', p. 88.

The other occasions on which Higden's description of Rome resorts to verse are more characteristic both of this chapter and of Higden's Italy in later chapters. For instance, the opening lines of Hildebert's prosopopoeic address to Rome, expressing awe at the unequalled city whose crumbling ruins point to its glorious past, are entirely consonant with Higden's emphasis on classical Rome's admirable yet ephemeral achievements, now irremediably past: 'Par tibi Roma nihil, cum sis fere tota ruina / Fracta docere potes, integra quanta fores' ('Rome, you have no equal, near-total ruin though you be. / In shards, you teach what you were when intact').⁵⁴ Hildebert's eighteen-distich address to classical Rome was followed by Christian Rome's eighteen-distich reply, clinching the matter of relative grandeur in the latter's favour. Whether by design or by accident, Ranulph's citation of Gregorius's minimal excerpt from Hildebert's double elegy (via William of Malmesbury's citation of the whole of its address to Rome) privileges the past that is reflected in the city's monuments and the interpretative process that leads to its appreciation.⁵⁵ The fifteenth-century translator, who generally opts for leaving Latin verse in Latin, here reproduces in English the heightened emotion inherent in the address ('O Rome, þer is noon oþer cite egalle to the nowe beenge in ruyne'); although, like Trevisa before him, he misses out the essential contrast between *fracta* ('shattered') and *integra* ('whole') in the second line, he does retain the didactic force of *docere*, pointing to the lesson to be learned from the city's ruins: 'Thou may teche nowe in confusion how nowble thow was a fore.'⁵⁶

Of the remaining two metrical quotations in this chapter, one – an expression of wonder as to how Caesar's obelisk was constructed, out of an unimaginable single stone or out of a plurality of invisibly joined stones – is taken over verbatim from Gregorius. The other is embedded

⁵⁴ Babington and Lumby, vol. 1, p. 212.

⁵⁵ For Hildebert of Le Mans, see S. Plotke, "'Par tibi Roma nihil.'" Rom-Bilder in lateinischen und mittelhochdeutschen Dichtungen des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts', in *Der Fall Roms und seine Wiederauferstehungen in Antike und Mittelalter*, ed. H. Harich-Schwarzbauer and K. Pollmann (Berlin, 2013), pp. 298–301. Ranulph explicitly refers to William's use of Hildebert, who was moreover not named by Gregorius. William slips the famous elegy to Rome and a series of Roman *mirabilia* between chapters relating to the First Crusade (*Gesta regum anglorum*, *The History of the English Kings*, ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols. [Oxford, 1998], I, iv, 351). (Further references to William's *Gesta regum anglorum* are to this edition and volume, quoted by book and chapter number.)

⁵⁶ Trevisa's transformation of the distich into two couplets here leads to good end-rhyme but at the price of semantic dilution: 'On alle þou schewest þy bounde / How grete þou were, when þow were sounde.' Both translations are from Babington and Lumby, vol. 1, p. 213.

in a passage that the compiler Ranulph has marked as his own and that he found worthy of being twice told. Although it was not included in the *Narracio*, he probably encountered the story of the discovery in Rome of the giant Pallas's incorrupt body both in William of Malmesbury and in Martinus Polonus.⁵⁷ Indeed, he will name William the second time that he reports the wondrous find, which he situates during the reign of Harthacnut and the emperor Henry II (VI, 21), whereas in the chapter *De urbe Roma*, this wonder taking us back to the time of Rome's Trojan foundation⁵⁸ is inserted after another marvel (not in Gregorius) involving, like this one ('in lyke wyse'), a flame that was inextinguishable.⁵⁹ There is an obvious parallel between the ever-burning flame in the ingeniously contrived lantern by the giant's head and the wondrous preservation of his excessively large body; this will only go the way of all flesh after a manipulation has led to the flame being extinguished.⁶⁰ Moreover, both flame and body link the past (construction of the lantern, Pallas's death at the hands of Turnus) to the 'present' (AD 1040, the time of discovery) – until exposure to the elements does away with both flame and corpse. So this episode reports both the marvel and its 'disenchantment', relegating the past firmly to the past and leaving the verse epitaph on the tombstone as its only record:

Filius Evandri Pallas, quem lancea Turni
Milites occidit more suo, jacet hic.

Pallas Euander his sone lieþ here:
Hym Turnus þe knyȝt wiþ his spere
Slowe in his manere.⁶¹

⁵⁷ See *Gesta regum anglorum*, II, 206, and *Martini Oppaviensis Chronicon Pontificum et Imperatorum*, ed. L. Weiland, MGH Scriptores 22 (Berlin, 1872), pp. 377–482 (p. 467). The episode, also in the *Speculum historiale* XXV, 34, circulated widely.

⁵⁸ The body of Pallas is said to exceed the height of Rome's walls; that he should be the giant rather than Turnus (as in the *Aeneid*) is perhaps best related to the tendency of founding legends to associate defeated, often subterranean, giants with initial stages of colonization – here of Latium by Aeneas.

⁵⁹ The associative sequence of episodes seems to be as follows: the hot baths of Beaneus, the unquenchable flame from the candlestick at Albisterio, the Pallas episode.

⁶⁰ William's *Gesta regum anglorum* records the whole episode from the 'scientific' perspective of embalming; the embalmed, buried body (consisting of skin, sinews and bones) had been preserved from decay by being protected against humidity (II, 206). Higden never mentions embalming and it is only when concluding this marvel in his sixth book that he refers to the decaying of the giant's sinews and skin (Babington and Lumby, vol. 7, p. 149).

⁶¹ Higden's Latin verses are identical both times he cites the epitaph (Babington and Lumby, vol. 1, p. 224 and vol. 7, p. 148). Trevisa experiments with triple rhyme

What stands out most in the *Polychronicon's* treatment of this story is the discussion that this epitaph triggers concerning its 'voice': who speaks/writes these lines? Although written in the third person, Trevisa at first boldly asserts that they represent 'þe writyng of mynde of hym þat lay þere' (Babington and Lumby, vol. 1, p. 225). For the English translator, then, these are the written words with which the dead giant himself speaks to authorize his identification as Pallas, son of one of Rome's founding kings, slain by Aeneas's enemy Turnus. William had authenticated the body by identifying it as that of Pallas of whom Virgil had spoken ('corpus Pallantis [. . .] de quo Virgilius narrat');⁶² but even when omitting reference to the epic Higden was not questioning the identity of the giant. What is uncertain, he says the second time he reports the wondrous find, is the identity of the poet whose lines are inscribed in the epitaph. In Trevisa's literal translation:

Y trowe noȝt þat þues vers were ymad a Latyn whanne þat giaunt was yburyed, þeyȝ Carmentis, Euander hys moder, hadde yvounde op tovorehond letters of Latyn, bote y trowe beter þat a were afterward ymad of Ennio, oþer of som oþer poet.⁶³

This uncertainty allows Higden to show both his knowledge of Rome's legendary past and the limits of that knowledge: being able to name the inventor of the Latin alphabet (Pallas's grandmother) and the 'father' of Latin poetry (Ennius, whom 'al poetes of Latyne folowede')⁶⁴ does not amount to identifying the poet whose lines 'afterward' bore testimony to the giant's lineage and death.

If no anxiety accompanies this gap in knowledge, there is little of the confidence with which Boccaccio in the 1360s, referring both to Virgil and Martinus, narrates and classifies a trimmed version of the same event, located in a field outside Rome; once he has quoted the verse

here (vol. 1, p. 225) but in VI, 21 he will resort to two ungainly longer lines ('Pallas Euander sone wham wyȝ his spere / Turnus þat knyȝt dude to deȝ in his wyse lyȝþ here', Waldron, *Trevisa's Translation*, p. 138). The epitaph is also found in a partial translation by an unknown writer, referred to as the 'Minor Version' by Waldron, *Trevisa's Translation*, pp. xiv, 139. Harley 2261 relates the discovery and ultimate fate of the giant's body but suppresses the epitaph.

⁶² *Gesta regum anglorum*, II, 206.

⁶³ Waldron, *Trevisa's Translation*, VI, 21 (p. 138). Higden here signals William as his authority and follows him closely; Trevisa in turn follows Higden closely, notwithstanding his earlier definition (in I, 24) of the epitaph as 'the words of the mind of the one who lay there'.

⁶⁴ IV, 18 (Harley 2261, Babington and Lumby, vol. 5, p. 55). Elsewhere in the *Polychronicon* we learn that Ennius was born in Taranto, led a simple life (with only one 'wench') in Rome, where he died of arthritis and was buried in Scipio's tomb. No specific works are attributed to him.

inscription on the tomb without raising issues of authorship, he proceeds to the next genealogical entry (Pallantia, daughter of Evander, follows Pallante, son of Evander).⁶⁵ Where Boccaccio classifies, Higden complicates. Nevertheless, if Italian humanism was to explore, compare and plunder classical and medieval texts with a view to creating a synthesis of the cultures of antiquity, then the author of the *Polychronicon* went some way towards sharing that ambition.⁶⁶ He stopped short however of engaging 'familiarly' with the past, which he allowed to remain different, even strange.⁶⁷ In its historical chapters the *Polychronicon's* Italy will yield further epitaphs that are suggestive of the role played by the peninsula in the author's geographical imaginary – an imaginary that is not always shared by his translators.

In the opening book of the *Polychronicon*, we have seen Higden's Rome embodying both its glorious classical past and its derelict state in the relative present of the twelfth century, yet the city is never represented as the Rome of its writer's time. How differently a historiographer like William of Malmesbury – one of the main sources for these chapters – relates to his urban subject. When William quotes Hildebert's praise of Rome, he is citing the words of a near contemporary; moreover, William – who, like Higden, never travelled outside England – adds to these verses the contrast between the city that was once mistress of the world ('domina orbis terrarum') and the small town ('oppidum exiguum') that is now inhabited by the most indolent of people ('inertissimi'), guilty of corruption and of simony.⁶⁸ In his approach to the sites of antiquity, Higden avoids all reference to contemporary or near-contemporary 'evidence', such as there may have been, preferring instead to cite the refracted observations of sources at a remove from his own time.⁶⁹ It does look as if he was content to allow classical Rome to be irremediably past, beyond experience, perhaps thereby obviating the need for a judgmental stance. In the hands of other writers, the city of *mirabilia*, reverberating with the names and voices of, and monuments to, the

⁶⁵ The only edition of the *Genealogia deorum gentilium* I have been able to consult is *La genealogia degli dei de' gentili*, trans. G. Betussi (Venice, 1569), where the episode figures on p. 204 (Book XII).

⁶⁶ See Taylor, *Universal Chronicle*, p. 76, on Higden's 'knowledge of the "classicizing" interests of works of contemporaries'.

⁶⁷ This is also observed in connection with the spectacle of Caesar's triumph in I, 25 by M. Nolan, *John Lydgate and the Making of Public Culture* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 216–19.

⁶⁸ *Gesta regum anglorum*, IV, 351.

⁶⁹ For instance, he cites John of Salisbury rather than the thirteenth-century John of Wales, in whose work he accessed much of the *Policraticus* (see Taylor, *Universal Chronicle*, pp. 79–80).

dead, was often an occasion for moralization.⁷⁰ In this chapter, at least, Higden resisted the temptation to reflect on the contrast between Caesar living and Caesar dead.⁷¹

In his occasional marked additions to, and unmarked transformations of, Higden's Rome, Trevisa could not resist comparing past with present, there with here. When translating the description of two marble horses commemorating the wondrous integrity of philosophers who walked around the city naked in a radical renunciation of all things worldly, we see him engage in a form of 'presenting' that we have come to associate with his work of translation. In a signed interjection taking us to the world of his experience, he stigmatizes those mendicants who claim to have renounced 'al þing' but nevertheless 'beep wel i-cloped and goop aboute and beggeþ and gadereþ money and corn and catel of oþer men' (Babington and Lumby, vol 1, p. 229).⁷² Idealizing or demonizing Romans clearly had its didactic uses for this translator. As for the fifteenth-century translator, his effaced presence in Harley 2261 does not prevent us from reading some of his interventions, in the form of mitigation or omission, as signs of his willingness to admire the achievements of classical Rome: in the chapter *De quibusdam Romanorum institutis et obseruantiis*, we could cite Higden's reference, via John of Salisbury, to the Romans' imperial ambition and pride (inflated by Trevisa but mitigated in Harley 2261) and their susceptibility to flattery and corruption (suppressed in Harley 2261 but emphasized by Trevisa).⁷³ Small wonder that 'humanist tendencies' have been attributed to the unknown translator of Harley 2261 by one of the few scholars to have reflected on his work, for the space of a paragraph.⁷⁴

In the geographical prelude to the 'chronicle of many times', Rome and its customs occupy over five times more manuscript space than all other Italian topographical sites together. It is hardly surprising that the six

⁷⁰ For the moralizing reflections inspired by Caesar's ashes in the *Mirabilia urbis Romae* and in John Capgrave's fifteenth-century *Solace of Pilgrims*, see C. D. Benson, 'The Dead and the Living: Some Medieval Descriptions of the Ruins and Relics Known to the English', in *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. A. Classen (Berlin, 2009), pp. 147–82 (p. 156).

⁷¹ In a later book (III, 42) he reports but does not comment on the verse inscription on St Peter's needle: 'Pou were grete, Cesar, al þe world is at ene, / And art now sette þere i-closed in a litel stene' (Trevisa). Harley 2261 does not here repeat the reference to Caesar's cremation or to the monument containing his ashes, already mentioned in I, 25.

⁷² Similarly, in III, 33 Roman *quaestors* will remind Trevisa of the 'cherles and pardoner'es' that are called *quaestors* 'now' (Babington and Lumby, vol. 4, p. 49).

⁷³ I, 25.

⁷⁴ Taylor, *Universal Chronicle*, p. 140.

historical books that follow return again and again to this city (and what it metonymically stands for) as they record and correlate the histories of Judeo-Christianity, of empires and emperors, kings, warriors, philosophers, bishops and popes. I propose now to look at some of the other cities figuring in the course of these histories and at the ways they contribute to an Italy that is not coextensive with Rome but that may share some of its features. This will have a bearing on two areas of enquiry: the extent to which the *Polychronicon* entertains an idea of a 'global' Italy that transcends the divides of its several 'parts' on the one hand and, on the other, the significance that this work attaches to great urban centres like Venice, Genoa and Florence – none of which were mapped in the chorographic first book.

Even allowing for the fact that the *Polychronicon* originated as a monastic production, at a distance from the commercial hub of London, it is striking that this work all but ignores so many of the great late-medieval Italian centres of trade, whose dominant presence in English commerce has been referred to as 'the Italian empire in England'.⁷⁵ Florence, for instance, is mentioned only as the town where a council was convened in 1055 by Pope Victor II.⁷⁶ Genoa, which will be associated with greed in the continuation of the *Polychronicon*, is otherwise only mentioned as a place of transit (for Augustine's relics on their way to Pavia and for Gelasius fleeing from Rome to Cluny).⁷⁷ Venice is not mentioned at all.⁷⁸ This is the more surprising as many other peoples are praised for their 'chaffare' and 'merchaundise', specifically in India, Egypt, Scythian Gothia, Phoenician Numidia, London and of course Higden's own Chester. Moreover, explicit opprobrium attaches to the idle and slothful Irish for not engaging in the commercial activities that they have allowed their Norse settlers to carry out on their shores (I, 33). Finally, Flanders and Brabantia receive special praise for the advantages that their waterways proffer in dyeing the cloth that the industrious and rich Flemish cloth-makers manufacture from imported English wool before exporting their merchandise well-nigh throughout Europe (I, 27).

⁷⁵ G. A. Holmes, 'Florentine Merchants in England, 1346–1436', *Economic History Review* n.s. 13 (1960), 193–208 (pp. 200–1).

⁷⁶ VI, 25.

⁷⁷ V, 24; VII, 15. Harley 2261 records events in the 1380s involving the ransoming by the Genoese of the Sicilian king for love of gold and the slaying of a Genoese wine merchant by Londoners incensed at the competitive prices of his wines (VII, 51).

⁷⁸ There is a Venasia/Venusia/Venusee mentioned as the birthplace of Horace, but the 'citee of Italy' it refers to is Venosa. Bartholomaeus – Higden's source for much of chapter 23 – had an idealizing description of Venicia/Venix that included Mantua in *De proprietatibus rerum*, XV, 168 (p. 820).

This praise is already found in Higden's thirteenth-century source,⁷⁹ to which he famously adds that a certain well in London and a brook that runs near Lincoln will allow for cloth to take on a fine shade of scarlet (I, 28). So even though the *Polychronicon* participates in the celebration of past and present commercial activity in provinces, cities and communities around the world, it denies to Italian cities the activities for which they were renowned in contemporary England. The only time that we are allowed to catch a glimpse of merchants rushing to the marketplace on the first day of the month, watched by thieves hiding in the woods ready to pounce on them, they are the Romans of Huguccio's *Derivationes*.⁸⁰

Of course 'history' unfolds in many Italian cities that it would be pointless to enumerate. In addition to the structured stories of founders, emperors and popes, there is another kind of history scattered throughout the *Polychronicon*: pieced together, it is a history of Latin literature that draws its own sketchy map of the places associated with Italian Latinity. This literature is only rarely that of the *auctores* listed in the *Polychronicon*'s second Preface. If Paul the Deacon and Bede will become objects of the literary historian's scrutiny, Pliny, Suetonius and Valerius Maximus, important as their work is to the compiler, will not. Obversely, many of the writers in whose 'history' Higden is interested (such as Varro, Lucan, Ovid, Vigil) are not listed in the Preface as *auctores*, even though he reaps the produce of their works. The idea of such a history may have been suggested to him by the *Speculum historiale*, with its methodically presented entries on classical and Christian authors, from whose writings Vincent cites extensively: there are three chapters of *flosculi* from Horace, seventeen from a wide range of Ovid's works, whilst a long quotation from the *Bucolics* (as Vincent calls the *Eclogues*) constitutes one of three chapters on Virgil.⁸¹

Keeping direct quotation to a minimum – the distich dominates – the author of the *Polychronicon* has gathered available information about the 'bio-bibliographies' of classical poets and historians whose writings also informed many of the work's geographical and historical details. For

⁷⁹ *De proprietatibus rerum*, XV, 53 (p. 760).

⁸⁰ Trevisa's 'marchaundes and chapmen' (for Higden's less specific 'venturi ad nundinas') appear as part of an explanation of the Roman calendar and its irregularities (I, 25; Babington and Lumby, vol. 1, p. 247); Higden's source here is part of Huguccio's entry on *calon* in Huguccio of Pisa, *Derivationes*, ed. E. Cecchini, G. Arbizzoni, S. Lanciotti, G. Nonni, M. Grazia Sassi and A. Tontini, 2 vols. (Florence, 2004), II, 153–5. In the *Polychronicon* the activities of 'chapmen' are of course not always positively connoted, e.g. when they are devious or a threat to the clergy.

⁸¹ VI, 68–70 (Horace), 106–22 (Ovid), 63 (*Bucolics*).

instance, Sallust, the 'writer of [hi]stories', whose authority underwrites paradisiac and maritime geography (I, 10, 13) as well as the compiler's conviction that the deeds of the Greeks were not as great as they were made to appear through 'ouermesure' (II, 7), himself becomes the subject of a 'story' spread across three chapters of the third book. His approximate place, 'Sabyne', for the land of the Sabines (III, 39),⁸² and no less approximate date of birth (during the reign of one of the Ptolemies in Egypt) precede his identification as the author of 'þe booke of Catilin his conspiracie' (III, 40). The report of his death in Rome follows that of Ovid's birth and becomes the occasion for mentioning some juicy details about his difficult relationship with Cicero, whose divorced wife Sallust had married. In addition to being designated as 'advokett' and 'writere of stories', Sallust is also enigmatically styled 'maister of pleyes' ('ludi magister'); it is to this playfulness, associated with inventiveness, that the *Polychronicon* (in all versions) attributes Sallust's decision to add the letter k to 'Latyn lettres, for to have som diverse of soun bytwene c and q. Onliche Latyn men useþ þe lettre k' (III, 43).

Other 'lives' of writers (Horace, Ovid, Virgil) are similarly pieced together out of skimpy data, often located in places whose names seem unfamiliar to authors and scribes and do not recur elsewhere in the *Polychronicon*; as with Sallust, they typically provide an occasion for assessing the writer's contribution to Latin letters – here in the form of spelling and phonetics, elsewhere we have a reflection on genre. The death of Persius 'Satiricus', about whom we learn preciously little in this work, prompts Ranulph to bring together no less than six names of classical writers who are classified in three categories: the accusatory satirists (Persius, Horace, Juvenal), the feigning poets (Ovid and Virgil), and the non-poet (Lucan) whose histories are written in verse (IV, 9).

Virgil and Horace are enlisted in support of Higden's work of compilation in the first Preface, where either the former (according to the authority of Isidore) or else the latter (according to Huguccio) is said to have defended himself from the accusation that he was borrowing from Homer (I, 1).⁸³ Ovid and Virgil often serve as authorities for the work's ethnographical and historical matter, the former in connection with mythology and the origins of pagan customs (from the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti*) and the latter as an authority on ghosts and on the rapes of Proserpina and Lucrece (from the *Aeneid*). Both

⁸² Harley 2261 omits the name, which is not that of a place (Babington and Lumby, vol. 4, pp. 150–1).

⁸³ Higden does not try to identify the original speaker of the statement that 'it were wel greet strengþe to wreste a mace out of Hercules honde' (Trevisa in Babington and Lumby, vol. 1, pp. 10–13).

are also the subject of titillating biographies, Virgil in connection with his practice of necromancy, Ovid as an author punished for his erotic works (explicitly the *Ars amatoria*, in which he ‘made ʒongelynges [to] love wifes to moche’) and deeds (‘Ovidius lay by þe emperesse’).⁸⁴ The *Polychronicon*’s only references to Mantua – which in the *Aeneid* played a part in the ‘Trojanization’ of the Romans and which must also have been known to Higden and Trevisa through Bartholomaeus – all figure as an epithet of the ‘poette Mantuan’ or as a designation of his birthplace;⁸⁵ like the nonce place-name Cremona (spelled ‘Gremoria’ in Trevisa, III, 40), where we learn that Virgil received his education, Mantua does not otherwise seem to be on the *Polychronicon*’s map of Italy. But I want to focus briefly on a feature of these ‘literary histories’ that epitomizes some of the characteristics we have already associated with this work’s writing of Rome: I am thinking of that repository of collective memory, the inscription on the tomb, with its uncertainty of voice and its estrangement of the past.

Both Virgil and Boethius are associated – directly and indirectly – with inscriptions on tombs located in Naples and (perhaps) Pavia, ‘in the contray of Melan’, where the latter was imprisoned and martyred as briefly related in V, 5. In the same passage, Boethius, whose personification of Philosophy as ‘a mayde’ has already been invoked as an instance of the legitimate use of ‘fable’ (II, 18), receives due credit for his outstanding learning (acquired in Rome and Athens), for his four books of the *De consolacione philosophiae* and for writings ‘of the sevene artes’. Greatest emphasis is not on his philosophical works, but on fifty brief ‘noble songes comicalle’ (Harley 2261), the ‘best’ of which is quoted by its opening line ‘O amor, deus, deitas’. Even more surprising than the attribution to Boys (as Trevisa calls him) of this twelfth-century *conductus* are the lines of a hymn in praise of the apostles Peter and Paul that follow; these are attributed to Boethius’s wife Elpes, daughter of the king of Sicily. At the heart of this decentred passage – it is after all the great Boethius who is the principal subject of this literary biography – lies her tomb, bearing the metrical inscription of which she is the speaker-poet:

Sche made a writynge to be grave on hire owne tombe, and made it in metre in þis manere: “Elpes was myn name, so Sicil brouȝt me forþ; Fer oute of londe myn housebonde love me ladde. In holy place I now reste in straungene londe. I queþe me to þe trone of pat luge þat nevere haþ ende. (Trevisa in Babington and Lumby, vol. 5, p. 321)

⁸⁴ IV, 4 (Babington and Lumby, vol. 4, pp. 316–17). Two penitent verses from his book *Epistulae ex Ponto* are also quoted.

⁸⁵ I, 1; III, 40; III, 44 (twice).

The epitaph (not metrified by Trevisa) summarizes the speaker's timeline by mentioning her birth in Sicily, her quasi-abduction by her loving husband 'far oute of londe' and her final resting place 'in straungene londe'. The location of the tomb is unspecified,⁸⁶ and the 'estranged' Italian mainland – the land of her marriage and burial – is made foreign, contrasting strikingly with the familiarity of the Christian message in its last line, which is consonant with the poetic corpus attributed to both Boethius and Elpes.

Virgil's tomb, with its famous inscription that Higden could have come across in a number of works (including Vincent), was a place spoken of with veneration by Higden's Italian contemporaries Petrarch and Boccaccio. In addition to associating its location (near Virgil's last home) with the scenic seclusion that they considered propitious for Virgil's writing of the *Aeneid* as well as desirable for their own intellectual activity, their correspondence shows that they worshipped 'in [their] mind's eye', if not necessarily by experience, the burial place of the poet's bones.⁸⁷ The epitaph is a succinct one, summarizing the poet's life in terms of place of birth (Mantua), death (Calabria, for Brindisi) and burial (Parthenope, for Naples), followed by references to his three major works, involving pastures ('pascua' for the *Eclogues*), farmland ('rura' for the *Georgics*) and warriors ('duces' for the *Aeneid*). What seems peculiar to the *Polychronicon* is not the inscription itself, which remained stable in the course of its long transmission,⁸⁸ but the question of voice with which it is associated:

Virgilius Narro, þe poete of Mantua, deyde at Brundusium whan he was aboute an fifty winter olde, and was i-buried at Naples wiþ suche a writynge on his tombe, þat he made whan he deyde, oþer Ovidius afterward, as som men wol mene. 'Mantua brougt me forth; Calabres ravesched me; holdeþ now Pertinope. I made lese fildes and lederes.'⁸⁹

Added (in the guise of an afterthought) to the affirmation that the inscription was of the deceased poet's own making, Ovid – writing

⁸⁶ The place is identified as Pavia in N. H. Kaylor's introduction to *A Companion to Boethius in the Middle Ages*, ed. N. H. Kaylor and P. E. Phillips (Leiden, 2012), p. 4.

⁸⁷ See the passages from Boccaccio's 1374 'Epistula ad Franciscum' and from his *De Genealogia deorum gentilium* printed in *The Virgilian Tradition: The First Fifteen Hundred Years*, ed. J. M. Ziolkowski and M. C. J. Putnam (New Haven, 2008), pp. 418–20.

⁸⁸ Ziolkowski and Putnam believe that the epitaph, in the exact wording of the Latin *Polychronicon* (which they do not cite), was 'probably written by a contemporary' of Virgil (*The Virgilian Tradition*, p. 404); their earliest quotation of the distich is in the work of fourth-century Aelius Donatus (p. 185).

⁸⁹ III, 44 (Babington and Lumby, vol. 4, pp. 240–3, here Trevisa). In Harley 2261, Virgil's places of death and burial are recorded, but the epitaph is elided.

'afterward' – provides an alternative voice for these lines. Complicating matters further, this is on dubious authority ('as som men wol mene').

As was the case with the Roman epitaph of Pallas, this grave inscription in the hands of its compiler is marked by an equivocation from which judgment is withheld: it is tempting to think that Higden here recalls the dilemma of the historian who is aware of the vagaries of textual transmission with their attendant uncertainties. The compiler's wariness is not unlike the translator's reluctance staged by Trevisa in his introductory *Dialogue between the Lord and the Clerk*; both are aware of their distance from the objects of historical enquiry. If Higden is generally content to leave that gap, to the extent of 'making strange', Trevisa's vernacular is inclined to bridge it, by explanatory comments for his uninformed readers or by other forms of presenting.

It has been pointed out often enough that in the fourteenth century Italy was a country in which only the literate lived and that if writers like Dante and Petrarch engaged with the concept of Italy at all, it was generally as part of a retrospective vision of classical Roman rule, not as a political project.⁹⁰ Although Italy is explicitly named over a hundred times in the *Polychronicon*, use of the noun 'Italiens' in its variant spellings to designate natives of Italy (Higden's *Italici*) is rare. The *Middle English Dictionary* cites Trevisa as the first author known to have used the term in this way, both in his translation of Bartholomaeus's *De proprietatibus* (fol. 237 in BL, MS Additional 27944, c. 1398) and in the *Polychronicon* VI, 11 and VI, 27 (Cambridge, St John's College, MS H.1, late fourteenth century, and BL, MS Harley 1900, c. 1425).⁹¹ Moreover, we learn little from the peninsula's protean designation as 'province', 'cuntre'/'contray', or 'nacioun'. The word 'province' (Latin *prouincia*), like Latin *pars*, denotes any subdivision or region of the *orbis terrarum*, whether mappable (e.g. Italy, Lombardy) or problematically mapped (Paradise, or 'the Iewery').⁹² Very occasionally (as in connection with biblical and ecclesiastical history) it is used in the more technical sense of a territorial unit outside Italy under the control of the Romans. In addition to designating Italy, the term 'cuntre'/'contray' (used of a discrete geographical entity defined by its borders, of an extensive region within a 'country', or even of a town) turns up as a qualification for Campania

⁹⁰ See, e. g., T. Hankey, 'Civic Pride versus Feelings for Italy in the Age of Dante', in *Medieval Europeans: Studies in Ethnic Identity and National Perspectives in Medieval Europe*, ed. A. P. Smyth (London 1998), pp. 196–216.

⁹¹ These instances would seem to predate the 1439 Rolls of Parliament cited by the OED, as did the translator behind Harley 2261, if he was working before 1439 (the term occurs there in VII, 51).

⁹² I, 10 (Babington and Lumby, vol. 1, pp. 66–7) and I, 13 (vol. 1, p. 101).

or a city like Milan. Not even the deployment of a term like 'nacio(u)n', focusing on collectivities, will throw much light on the *Polychronicon's* understanding of Italy. Most often used in the sense of a people sharing the same geographic, ethnic and cultural origin, translating Latin *gens*, it is applied indifferently to larger collectivities ('nacioun of Duchemen', 'of Grees') or smaller, more circumscribed ones ('nacioun of Coleyne' or of 'Ionica'). The term is used of the Romans in connection with their excessive praise of Augustus, which is likened to Greek praise of Alexander and British praise of an unverifiable King Arthur; together they illustrate the principle that every 'nacioun' tends to exaggerate the importance of 'som oon of þe same nacioun' (V, 6). Here, then, we are in the presence of a nation defined as a collectivity that has a vested interest in stories (verifiable or not) commemorating and glorifying its past. But, in an 'aside' to Trojan history in Book II, Ranulph undermines the validity of nationhood constituted in this way: determining the exact filiation between Brutus and Aeneas becomes the occasion for exposing the contradictions between the mutually exclusive stories of the Britons (the Welsh) and the Romans. At least one of these 'national' foundation myths must be wrong and its proponents in error (II, 27).

Perhaps we can tease more sense out of the references to Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, as belonging both to the 'nacioun of Italy' (VII, 1) and to the 'nacioun of Lombardes' (VII, 6).⁹³ There are other occasions in the *Polychronicon* when Lombardy seems not just to be part of, but equated with a territory called Italy that should be, but is not identical with the cartographic space of the peninsula. After Alboin occupies 'alle Ytaly, Rome excepte' (V, 7),⁹⁴ the Longobards reign over a territory (also referred to as realm or kingdom) represented as separate from Rome only, until their last king Desiderius (designated in one and the same passage as 'kyng of the Longobardes' and 'kyng of Ytaly') is replaced by Charlemagne's son Pippin as king of an Italy (or a Lombardy) reconciled with Rome (V, 26).

But this Italy, like this Lombardy, is a function of historicization and cannot be related to the writers' present, for instance as an effect of the increased presence in London of Lombard bankers and merchants, when 'the word "Lombard" becomes synonymous with "Italian"'.⁹⁵ On

⁹³ Babington and Lumby, vol. 7, p. 331. Trevisa's use of 'nacioun' is prolific and it is typical that where he resorts to the term, as here, Harley 2261 either has the more neutral 'cuntre' or changes the construction ('borne in Lumbardy').

⁹⁴ From Harley 2261 in Babington and Lumby, vol. 5, p. 369.

⁹⁵ D. Zancani, 'The Notion of "Lombard" and "Lombardy" in the Middle Ages', in *Medieval Europeans*, ed. Smyth, pp. 217–32 (p. 222). For an early reference to the London Lombards in Matthew Paris's *Chronica maiora*, see N. Havely, 'Britain and

the other hand, returning to the example of Archbishop Lanfranc, the negative connotations of greed that attached to the Lombards as a result of their mercantile activity are paradoxically brought into play in the praise of this scholar's exceptional integrity:

And þey covetise be a special vice to Lombardes, he put þat gley-
mynge fer from his persone, so þat he spende in pore men mete and
drynke and cloop.⁹⁶

As for Lanfranc's exceptional 'lettrure', it is associated with the 'conynge of Italy' in an episode that sees him get the better of an envious and boastful monk parading as learned.⁹⁷ But although Italy is there evoked as a place of superior scholarship, it does not have a monopoly on this prized good. I suspect that a larger-scale analysis might confirm what these examples have suggested, namely that the *Polychronicon's* ubiquitous references to a place called Italy fail to produce a homogeneous picture that could be made to serve a single idea (or ideal). Instead, they allow their slippery referent to be subject to the inconsistencies of tradition and the vagaries of historical change.

I began this journey through the *Polychronicon's* Italy convinced, with Galloway, that its author's 'sense of history and hence of culture emphasizes the material location of events and thoughts'.⁹⁸ 'Descriptions of places' (Harley 2261) provided by the first book are defined in the Preface as the first of several prerequisites for a full understanding of 'stories'; the search for a *mapa mundi* that could visualize those places seems to confirm the grounding of this history in geography. But several challenges have emerged from my examination of the chorographic and cartographic space of Italy. On the *Polychronicon* maps, that space is so spare as to be almost non-specific, a near-blank screen on which to project the changing place names resulting from a complex history of strife, defeat and colonization. Perhaps this relative vacancy was the only way to represent a space of 'many histories' and to resist ideological appropriation.⁹⁹ Those few place-names that do appear, on the maps and in the description *De Italia*, take us back to almost a millennium before Higden's own time and suggest scant interest in the sites of recent events. By contrast with the peninsula, whose parts (Calabria

Italy: Trade, Travel and Translation', in *A Companion to Medieval English Literature and Culture c. 1350–c. 1500*, ed. P. Brown (Oxford, 2007), pp. 215–29 (p. 216).

⁹⁶ Trevisa, VII, 6 (Babington and Lumby, vol. 7, p. 337).

⁹⁷ VII, 6 (Babington and Lumby, vol. 7, pp. 332–3).

⁹⁸ Galloway, 'Latin England', p. 55.

⁹⁹ Higden's resistance to ideology as well as his problematization of the past are discussed in connection with his understanding of British identity as complex by P. Brown, 'Higden's Britain', in *Medieval Europeans*, ed. Smyth, pp. 103–18.

and Campania) stand in an uncertain relationship to the whole, Rome is a central presence in the verbal and visual maps. Constituted by enigmatic monuments that challenge understanding, the city's sites are presented as both over-determined (in the sense that they generate multiple meanings) and indeterminate (their conundrums are not resolved).

The search for a geographically anchored history of Italy, with its uncertain relationship to Rome, also met with difficulties. In the various stages of its history, Rome is represented as occupying a variety of spaces, ranging from the city 'out there' (but also 'back here', in the writer's Chester),¹⁰⁰ to Tuscany, to the peninsula (exclusive or inclusive of its several realms, such as Lombardy), to a more or less extensive empire, or even a global one under Augustus, who 'brouȝte alle þe kyngdoms of þe world in to oon kyngdom al hool.'¹⁰¹ If for the Church historian there can be no Italy without Rome, there is an Italy in excess of Rome. It too is protean and elusive, remote in time and space from those states and principalities whose flourishing communities were commercially involved with the English at least a century before the *Polychronicon* began to be written. This compendious work engages with Italy as the home of Latinity and a storehouse of literary writings, classical and Christian, without which there could be no historical knowledge. But as objects of critical scrutiny the histories that these writings yield prove 'unreliable' or incompatible with one another and with competing forms of 'evidence'; as such, they are subject to revision. The unstructured bio-bibliographies of their writers often involve geographical framing of individual careers, especially evident in inscriptions on their tombstones, which are presented in such a way as to provoke wonder and raise doubts: they are made strange. Whether carved in stone, or written on parchment, the geographically grounded story of a dead Italian, or history of Italy, is always a complex object of interrogation for a compiler alert to the uncertainties of textual transmission and the potential dissonances of multiple voices. Estrangement and equivocation are the guarantors of this complexity.

¹⁰⁰ Chester is doubly Roman: once as a colony whose stone walls captured Caesar's name on coins, and again as the chosen retreat and final resting place of the Roman-German emperor Henry IV (I, 48).

¹⁰¹ For this climax of a compressed history of pre-Christian Rome as a succession of realms ('Latyns', Albans, Trojans), followed by the Republic and culminating in the emperor's swallowing of kingdoms, see II, 8 (Babington and Lumby, vol. 2, p. 270-3).

Richard de Bury, Petrarch and Avignon

Carolyn P. Collette

Francesco Petrarca (1304–74) termed Avignon ‘Babylon on the Rhône’, a place he described as a site of greedy struggle, moral turpitude and tartarean darkness, a den of thieves where ‘there is no guardian for virtue, justice has perished, liberty has died, equity has vanished, pleasure rules, avarice rages, and envy seethes’.¹ But while for Petrarch Avignon represented the corrupting confluence of secular and ecclesiastical power, he joined the household of Cardinal Giovanni Colonna there in 1326, and Avignon was where he first saw Laura, in April of 1327. Indeed, it is hard to overestimate the degree to which Avignon in the early fourteenth century flourished as a kind of cultural *entrepôt*, a place of exchange and profit where Italian, French and English ecclesiasts and diplomats met. Beryl Smalley has made this case succinctly: ‘Clerical Europe in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries was still a family with its centre at the Curia.’² The papal court was the destination for those who sought preferment, confirmation, connection and material benefits. The English scholar, cleric and bibliophile Richard de Bury (1287–1345) journeyed there twice on the king’s business, in 1330 and 1333. In addition to being appointed a papal chaplain, it was there that he secured the wealthy bishopric of Durham and there that he met his fellow bibliophile Petrarch in 1333 while on a diplomatic mission for Edward III. Petrarch recalled that meeting and his impression of the English cleric in a letter written to Tommaso da Messina on the subject

¹ Petrarch, ‘A Den of Thieves’, Letter XIII, to an unknown addressee, in *Babylon on the Rhône: A Translation of Letters by Dante, Petrarch, and Catherine of Siena on the Avignon Papacy*, trans. R. Coogan (Madrid, 1983), p. 73. This is letter 13 in the *Liber sine nomine* in which Petrarch frequently excoriates the Avignon court through a series of classical references coded to refer to his contemporaries at the court. See N. P. Zacour, *Petrarch’s Book without a Name* (Toronto, 1973), pp. 76–82.

² B. Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1960), p. 74.

of Petrarch's hope that de Bury might be able to tell him the location of the legendary northern land of Ultima Thule:

Michi quidem de hac re cum Ricardo, quondam Anglorum regis cancellario, sermo non otiosus fuit; viro ardentis ingenii nec literarum inscio, et qui, ut in Britannia genitus atque educatus abditarumque rerum ab adolescentia supra fidem curiosus, talibus presertim questionibus enodandis aptissimus videretur. Ille autem, seu quia sic speraret, seu quia puderet ignorantiam fateri – qui mos hodie multorum est, qui non intelligunt quanta modestie laus est homini nato nec nosse omnia valenti, profiteri ingenue se nescire quod nesciat – seu forte, quod non suspicor, quia huius michi archani notitiam invideret, respondit certe se dubietati mee satisfacturum, sed non prius quam ad libros suos, quorum nemo copiosior fuit, in patriam revertisset [. . .] Sed dum promissor ille meus abiisset, sive nichil inveniens, sive noviter iniuncti pontificalis officii gravi munere distractus, quamvis sepe literis interpellatus, expectationi mee non aliter quam obstinato silentio satisfacit. Ita michi Thule amicitia britannica nichil notior facta est.³

'I held an interesting conversation about this with Richard, former chancellor of the English king, a man with a sharp mind and considerable knowledge of letters. Born and educated in Great Britain and incredibly inquisitive from his youth about unknown things, he seemed most capable of solving such obscure problems. However, either because he hoped to do what he said, or because he was ashamed to admit ignorance (a custom which is very common today among those who do not understand how praiseworthy it is for a man who is not born to know all things to be modest and to confess honestly that he does not know what he does not know) or perhaps, as I doubt, because he preferred to keep from me information about this secret matter, he answered that he would certainly satisfy my doubt but not before he had returned to his native land and to his books of which he possessed an extraordinary number.

For when I was his friend he was abroad dealing with matters concerning the Holy See for his master [. . .] But though he left with a promise on his lips, either because he found nothing or because of the serious duties of his pontifical office which he had newly assumed [bishop of Durham], he satisfied my expectation with nothing but obstinate silence notwithstanding the many reminders I sent him. Thus I learned nothing more of Thule from this British friend.'⁴

³ Latin text from Francesco Petrarca, *Le Familiari. Libro terzo*, ed. and trans. U. Dotti, (Rome, 1994), pp. 4–6.

⁴ English translation from Francesco Petrarca, *Letters on Familiar Matters: Rerum familiarum*, ed. and trans. A. S. Bernardo, 3 vols. (Albany NY, 1975), III (*libri*

This letter is both frustrated and frustrating because of the missed opportunity it documents. What might have happened had Petrarch and de Bury continued to be in contact? In this essay I want to use this letter to consider de Bury as a figure whose work and interests intersected in significant ways with elements of early fourteenth century humanism. Following this lead, I will touch on three salient points: Petrarch's and de Bury's shared bibliophilia; their common reliance on intellectual conversation with colleagues as a crucial forum for learning; and ways in which de Bury's bibliophilia invites us to ask about the literary culture of Edward III's court.

The letter is a narrative of waning hope, but is unquestioning in its fundamental assumption that books are the matrix that unites Petrarch and de Bury. In it Petrarch implies it was entirely reasonable for de Bury to want to wait to go home to his books to research the answer to the question of where Ultima Thule lay, and it is obvious that he had some hope that this line of inquiry would bear fruit. These hopes may have been raised because of de Bury's famous self-promotion, or because Petrarch recognized a kindred spirit in de Bury. Both authors valued the ability to write well. Petrarch's rejection of the inelegancies of medieval Latin in favour of Ciceronian style is well known. Less well known is that de Bury was very personally linked to two books, both of them attentive to matters of style and composed in the epistolary genre favoured by Petrarch which became a hallmark of early humanist writing.

The first of these, termed *Liber epistolaris* (c. 1320–25), is a copy of 1,500 documents, largely diplomatic correspondence (but also including some papal bulls) written in a single hand, perhaps his own, which de Bury assembled in the early years of his career as a royal servant. The letters, which are not arranged by date, are copies of originals written from the twelfth to the early fourteenth century. De Bury's biographer, Noel Denholm-Young, argued that the book is a collection of *belles lettres* and tied it to de Bury's own interest in the rhythmical Latin prose cursus style evident in his more famous book, *Philobiblon*, written c. 1345 and first published in Cologne in 1473.⁵ Denholm-Young also noted that the volume includes thirteenth-century Italian exemplars of set speeches and letters, evidence of de Bury's interest in rhetoric, saying that he was 'essentially a stylist' who obeyed strictly the rules of the medieval style in which he wrote, *levissimo stylo modernorum*: 'In his obedience to rule,

I–VIII), pp. 115–116. Petrarch became interested in Ultima Thule because it was mentioned by Virgil, Seneca and Boethius (Bernardo, p. 115).

⁵ N. Denholm-Young, 'Richard de Bury (1287–1345)', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 4th s. 20 (1937), 135–68 (pp. 140–4).

in his subtle use of compound *clausulae*, in all the rhetorical devices of the age, he is unexcelled.⁶

De Bury's great work, *Philobiblon*, written at the end of his life, is an extended letter to the reader written in this 'very playful modern style'. It is full of rich figures, in the same way that Petrarch's letters are full of a kind of intimate rhetorical excess. The strong narrative voice of the *Philobiblon* creates a speaking text full of life and passion. Such lively style reflects Bury's love of books as powerful objects of *vertu*. Both Petrarch and de Bury vivify books in the same way, attributing to them agency, life and feeling. Petrarch wrote:

[L]ibri medullitus delectant, colloquuntur, consulunt et viva quadam nobis atque arguta familiaritate iunguntur, neque solum se se lectoribus quisque suis insinuat, sed et aliorum nomen ingerit et alter alterius desiderium facit. (*Fam.* III, 18, pp. 90–92.)

'Books please inwardly, they speak with us, advise us and join us together with a certain living and penetrating intimacy, nor does this instill only itself into its readers, but it conveys the names and desires for others.' (Bernardo, p. 157.)

Petrarch's eagerness is not so much for the physical books as for their contents; books are the necessary means, but not necessarily ends in themselves. The search for books is a primary duty:

Tu vero, si tibi carus sum, aliquibus fidis et literatis viris hanc curam imponito: Etruriam perquirant, religiosorum armaria evolvant ceterorumque studiosorum hominum, siquid usquam emergeret leniende dicam an irritande siti mee ydoneum [. . .] quoque vigilantior fias, scito me easdem preces amicis aliis in Britanniam Galliasque et Hispanias destinasse. (*Fam.* III, 18, p. 96.)

'If you care for me, make this request of some trustworthy and lettered men: let them search throughout Tuscany, let them roll out the closets and chests of their church people and other men of letters in case something might emerge that might be suitable to soothe or irritate my thirst [. . .] And so that you might be more vigilant, know that I sent the same request to other friends in Great Britain, France and Spain.' (Bernardo, p. 160.)

Using similar tropes, de Bury writes in *Philobiblon* of 'freely searching into the hiding places of books':

Tunc nobilissimorum monasteriorum aperiebantur armaria, reserabantur scrinia et cistulae solvebantur, et per longa saecula in sepulcris

⁶ Denholm-Young, 'Richard de Bury', p. 158.

soporata volumina expergiscunt attonita, quaeque in locis tenebrosis latuerant novae lucis radiis perfunduntur. Delicatissimi quondam libri, corrupti et abominabiles iam effecti, murium quidem foetibus cooperti et vermium morsibus terebrati, iacebant exanimes; [. . .] Inter haec nihilominus, captatis temporibus, magis voluptuose consedimus [. . .] amoris nostri obiectum reperimus et fomentum. [. . .] [N]unc ad sedem Romanam, nunc ad curiam Franciae, nunc ad mundi diversa dominia, taediosis ambassiatibus ac periculosis temporibus mittebamur, circumferentes tamen ubique illam, quam aquae plurimae nequiverunt extinguere, caritatem librorum. Haec omnium peregrinationum absinthia quasi quaedam pigmentaria potio dulcoravit.⁷

‘Then the chests of the noblest monasteries were opened; cases were brought forth, caskets were unlocked, volumes that had slumbered long ages in their tombs awakened astonished, and those that had lain hidden in places of darkness were overwhelmed with rays of new light. Books once most dainty but now become corrupted and disgusting, strewn over with the litters of mice and bored with the gnawings of worms, were lying about almost lifeless; [. . .] Nevertheless, seizing on every moment of leisure, we sat down among them with greater pleasure [. . .] for there we found both the object and the incitement of our love. [. . .] [W]e were sent on tedious embassies in times of peril, now to the Roman See, now to the Court of France, and now to divers kingdoms of the world, yet bearing with us everywhere that love of books which many waters could not quench. This like a honeyed drink sweetened the bitterness of all our travel.’⁸

Over the course of this description the hiding places of books morph into tombs from which long-forgotten volumes are resurrected, a consistent metaphor of early humanist bibliophiles from Petrarch to Poggio Bracciolini, of whose determined searches Stephen Greenblatt writes, ‘What emerged from the obscurity of the library was not a link in a long chain of texts, but rather the thing itself, wearing borrowed garments, or even the author himself, wrapped in gravecloths and stumbling into the light.’⁹ Greenblatt suggests that the mark of the humanist lies in the recognition that ‘something that had seemed alive was really dead’.¹⁰

For Petrarch, Richard de Bury and other early humanist bibliophiles, the recovery of texts was a kind of time travel, a rejection of medieval appropriations of the classical world in favour of recognizing the classical past as lost, needing/waiting to be found. Recovered books, some long

⁷ Richard de Bury, *The Philobiblon*, ed. and trans. E. C. Thomas (Oxford, 1960), pp. 82–4. All further quotations from the Latin text are from this edition.

⁸ Richard de Bury, *The Philobiblon*, trans. A. Taylor (Berkeley, 1948), pp. 48–9. All further quotations in English are from Taylor’s translation.

⁹ S. Greenblatt, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* (New York, 2011), p. 180.

¹⁰ Greenblatt, *Swerve*, p. 120.

suppressed, like Lucretius's *De rerum natura*, which Poggio Bracciolini discovered and brought back to life, were authentic voices of the past, unmediated, free of the accretion of complementary cultural voices and agendas constructed over a thousand years. Found in obscurity, reclaimed in libraries, this precious treasure is linked to contemplation, quiet and regeneration. Like Petrarch, whose love of books was linked to solitude and quiet, de Bury writes of the libraries of Paris as 'green pleasure gardens, academic meadows [. . .] lounging-seats of Athens'.¹¹ Recovered books are not merely the dust and detritus of dead hands, but potent and generative: 'But the written truth of a book, not fleeing, but lasting, discloses itself plainly to the sight, and, passing through the open portals of the eyes, the antechamber of perception, and the halls of the imagination, enters the chamber of the understanding and reclines upon the couch of memory, where it engenders the eternal truth of the mind.'¹² Toward the end of *Philobiblon*, de Bury writes of the power of books to unite and transcend time: 'By books we call to mind the past, we prophesy in some manner of the future, and by the remembrance of writing we strengthen the present, which ever flows and glides away.'¹³ The transcribers of old books 'are as it were, begetters of new sons', working in the shadow and mode of God the creator: 'Our Savior performed the office of a writer [. . .] bending Himself downward, He wrote with His finger on the earth [. . .]'.¹⁴

The second point I want to make concerns Petrarch's manifest interest in the intersection of learning and learned conversation among colleagues. Nancy Struever remarks that Petrarch's opposition to the 'formal and dysfunctional academic constraints of the university' was matched by his dedication to a new kind of community, that of the 'informal and intimate relations of friendship, of a community conceived as a circle of friends devoted to *litterae*, literate wisdom', whose end is answering the question, 'How should one live?'¹⁵ Petrarch's description of their meeting implies that he saw in de Bury someone with whom he could have such a relationship, through a continuing correspondence that would support mutual interest in learning and knowledge. The disappointment in

¹¹ *Philobiblon*, trans. Taylor, p. 49.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 10. 'Sed veritas scripta libri, non succiviva sed permanens, palam se praebet aspectui et per sphaerulas pervias oculorum, vestibula sensus communis et imaginationis atria transiens, thalamum intellectus ingreditur, in cubili memoriae se recondens, ubi aeternam mentis congenerat veritatem' (*Philobiblon*, ed. Thomas, p. 20).

¹³ *Philobiblon*, trans. Taylor, p. 85.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 88.

¹⁵ N. Struever, *Theory as Practice: Ethical Inquiry in the Renaissance* (Chicago, 1992), p. 6.

his letter stems as much from the loss of that possibility as from his continuing curiosity about Ultima Thule. One of the salient elements of Richard de Bury's life, documented by his earliest biographer William de Chambre and cited consistently, is the circle of eminent English scholar-theologians in his household or affinity in Durham and London.¹⁶ They included Thomas Bradwardine, Walter Burley, Richard FitzRalph, Robert Holcot, John Mauduit, Richard de Kilmington, Richard Benworth and Walter Segrave. De Bury describes at length his reliance on and joy in such circles. He had as comrades in 'our chamber', 'on our journeys' and 'as partakers of our board' men who were interested in 'demonstrative courses of reasoning, recital of physical processes and treatises of Catholic doctors' and 'quickenings conferences on questions of morals'. Mendicants formed an essential part of this household who, when he became bishop, dined at his table, 'men as distinguished in morals as in letters' who devoted themselves to the work of 'correcting, expounding, collating and compiling' various volumes of his growing library.¹⁷ In *Philobiblon* de Bury describes his household as one in which meals were followed by conversation and discussion on various learned subjects, members of his household and guests participating.

The men who frequented his table have been specifically linked to early humanist learning. In his *Medieval Books of Merton College*, F. W. Powicke ventures the assertion that the 'wider, the less systematic century reflects the influence of [. . . the] humanistic interest in the fellows who were associated with Bradwardine'. These were men, Powicke says, who 'belonged to a more expansive, cultivated and wealthier set', who 'moved in and often became ornaments of high ecclesiastical life' in England and on the continent.¹⁸ Beryl Smalley agrees, suggesting it was Bradwardine's influence that may have been 'responsible for the more humane character of the books acquired' by Merton College.¹⁹

Members of de Bury's household were also intimate members of royal households. Bradwardine became Edward's valued confessor; Burley was chaplain/almoner to Queen Philippa and later tutor to the Black Prince.²⁰ The works they wrote constitute a famous apogee in

¹⁶ William de Chambre, 'An Account of Bibliophile Richard de Bury's Life from the Continuation of the History of Durham', trans. W. L. North from the edition in *Historiae Dunelmensis scriptores tres*, ed. J. Raine, Surtees Society 9 (London, 1839), pp. 125–56 (pp. 127–30), <https://thehaskinssociety.wildapricot.org/Translated-Documents> [accessed 12 August 2017].

¹⁷ *Philobiblon*, trans. Taylor, pp. 50–1, 53.

¹⁸ F. M. Powicke, *The Medieval Books of Merton College* (Oxford, 1931), p. 25.

¹⁹ Smalley, *English Friars*, p. 74.

²⁰ K. Walsh, *A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate: Richard FitzRalph in Oxford, Avignon and Armagh* (Oxford, 1981), p. 20.

the history of medieval English logical thought. But they went beyond scholasticism to consider questions closely allied to Petrarch's sense of the ultimate value of learning as providing answers to the question of how we should live. Walter Burley, while he lived in the south of France, wrote a commentary (c. 1330) on Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, as well as a treatise entitled *De vita et moribus philosophorum*, comprising biographies of ancient philosophers with excerpts from their work, in effect familiarizing the philosophers.²¹ Richard FitzRalph, who spent a number of years between 1337 and 1355 in the papal court, where he was a frequent preacher, engaged in a line of thinking about the relationship between lordship and grace that he developed to criticize mendicant claims to privilege. Ultimately, Wyclif adapted FitzRalph's thinking in his own doctrine of lordship and grace, as well as some of his anti-fraternal arguments which support Lollard thinking – arguing, for example, that a bishop is no bishop if he is in a state of mortal sin; that those who abuse their faculties and privileges have no right to them in the sight of God the just judge.

Bradwardine, famous for his refutation of Pelagianism, also imagined a universe in which God might have created many earths, and posited that the causes of 'virtue' lay not in the planets *per se*, but in a combination of planetary influence and essential human nature. His most famous work, *De causa Dei*, incorporates 'numerous quotations from the Latin classics'.²² Robert Holcot, who anticipated Nicole Oresme in writing a commentary on Aristotle's *De coelo*, developed a radical theology of grace based on individual capacity and intention: God will grant salvation to all those who do their best to obey his commands and adhere to the Articles of the Faith. Holcot is also, as Beryl Smalley has shown, one of the most inventive and imaginative of the group, leaving a body of work original for its wit and creative narrative. His commentary on the *Book of Wisdom* begins with laudatory biographies of good women in the Christian tradition and then moves into praising classical women.²³ It thus includes a series of narratives of the lives of exemplary pagan heroines which anticipates what Boccaccio does in part in *De mulieribus claris*, praising women for their contributions to stable households and society. These men, like Petrarch, were devout Christians, for whom the fusion of Christian and classical learning was the highest form of *clergie*.

²¹ Walter Burley lived at Toulouse and Montpellier as well as in Bologna and Avignon.

²² Smalley, *English Friars*, p. 73.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

The third point I want to make builds on Petrarch's implicit assumption that books are private possessions, objects of *vertu* privately accessed by individuals. De Bury has become famous for his extravagance in purchasing and his cunning in extracting desirable books from other owners. *Philobiblon* makes clear that books became the vectors connecting him to a number of important intellectuals who thought and worked in new areas of learning. One of the most infamous of these connections is that with Richard of Wallingford, the abbot of the then-embattled abbey of St Alban. Wallingford is famous as the inventor of a highly complex astronomical clock which predated the renowned Italian clock of Giovanni de' Dondi by several decades.²⁴ In 1330, de Bury arranged a *quid pro quo* with Wallingford, who sent him manuscripts of works by Jerome, Terence, Virgil and Quintilian from the monastic library in exchange for preventing a 'royal inquiry into his misrule of the abbey';²⁵ in addition, Wallingford sold thirty-two other volumes valued at fifty pounds to de Bury, and the *Gesta abbatum* of St Alban's records that Wallingford split the profit with the refectorer and the cook.²⁶ We know of this exchange – how many other such occurred of which we cannot know?

While Richard de Bury seems to have intended his own very extensive collection of books ultimately to form part of an Oxford collegiate library open to poor scholars, he lived in a world of private book-collecting which included members of the royal court. In his early fourteenth-century service to the royal family, de Bury was an intimate member of the household of the Prince of Wales.²⁷ Mark Ormrod has argued that Richard de Bury was more than Edward III's royal servant; that he was a close confidant and a participant in creating a diplomacy of secrecy that became a hallmark of Edward's policy.²⁸ In 1325, when

²⁴ Richard of Wallingford, too, has an Avignon connection, journeying there to receive his confirmation of office as abbot of St Alban's in 1326–7.

²⁵ On de Bury's book-hunting, see W. S. Gibson, 'Book-Hunting under Edward III', *Miscellanies of the Philobiblon Society* 9 (1865–6), 3–78, esp. pp. 67–9 on Wallingford. See also C. Cheney, 'Notes and Documents: Richard de Bury, Borrower of Books', *Speculum* 48 (1973), 325–8.

²⁶ Cheney, 'Notes and Documents', p. 325. See also J. North, *God's Clockmaker: Richard of Wallingford and the Invention of Time* (London, 2005), pp. 107–10, for Richard of Wallingford's connections to and dealings with de Bury.

²⁷ Denholm-Young, 'Richard de Bury', p. 138.

²⁸ W. M. Ormrod, 'The King's Secrets: Richard de Bury and the Monarchy of Edward III', in *War, Government and Aristocracy in the British Isles, c. 1150–1500: Essays in Honour of Michael Prestwich*, ed. C. Given-Wilson, A. Kettle and L. Scales (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 163–78. De Bury was marshal in the royal household, keeper and treasurer of the Wardrobe, keeper of the privy seal (1329–33) and chancellor of England (1334). At Avignon he was a chaplain of the papal chapel

Queen Isabella fled to France with the Prince of Wales, in his function as constable of Bordeaux de Bury was their close associate, crucially 'able to supply them with needed money'.²⁹ As Isabella's famous collection of romance volumes suggests – and a roll of chamber accounts from 1341 testifies – she regularly read books, shared and loaned them and ordered them to be written and illuminated.

De Bury's own well-known interest in books and Isabella's library of romances are not directly connected, but they encourage us to look more closely at some of the assumptions literary critics have made about literary culture at Edward III's court. Putting aside the myth that de Bury was the young Edward's tutor, we might yet ask if de Bury's love of books may have been nourished in Edward's royal household, or his bibliophilia encouraged there. By the time that Isabella the queen-mother died in 1358, her literary tastes seem to have matured.³⁰ She left thirty volumes, of which ten were romances, vernacular stories of Tristan and Isolde, Perceval and Gawain, a *Brut* and a book of the Trojan War. In addition to these volumes of secular, vernacular literature, Isabella's possessions included a series of three panel paintings *de opere Lombardorum*, painted in the style of northern Italy. According to Juliet Vale, these are the earliest evidence of English awareness of the new Italian style in art.³¹

Edward III, like Richard II, has been assumed to have been uninterested in collecting books. But Philippa of Hainault, Edward's queen, attracted Froissart to her court and household, and Chaucer and Gower found the royal court a place in which to live and write. Juliet Vale's work on chivalry and the court of Edward III has brought to light the fact that Edward did indeed have a fairly extensive library of 160 volumes in his wardrobe in the Tower, administered by John Fleet. Many of these books were spiritual in nature, but a large number were secular, and included texts on governance as well as vernacular translations. Thus Edward III's own collection of books may have been more extensive than has been assumed.

Richard de Bury's biography customarily concludes with the failure of his projected common library and the dispersal of his own collection

(North, *God's Clockmaker*, pp. 108–10). For his biography, see J. De Ghellinck, 'Un évêque bibliophile au XIV^e siècle: Richard Aungerville de Bury (1345). Contribution à l'histoire de la littérature et des bibliothèques médiévales', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 18 (1922), 271–313.

²⁹ Denholm-Young, 'Richard de Bury', p. 144.

³⁰ J. Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and its Context 1270–1350* (Woodbridge, 1982), pp. 49–50.

³¹ In 1361 Hugh of St Alban's, the king's principal painter in St Stephen's Chapel, left 'unam tabulam de VI peces de Lombardy', and the chapel seems to have been influenced by Lombard style (Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry*, p. 52).

of books. But his story can be told with another kind of conclusion. In a trope of knowledge used by Oresme in France, and by the translators of the Wyclif Bible in England, he writes in *Philobiblon* of Minerva traversing the globe:

Minerva mirabilis nationes hominum circuire videtur, et a fine usque ad finem attingit fortiter, ut se ipsam communicet universis. Indos, Babylonios, Aegyptios atque Graecos, Arabes et Latinos eam pertransisse iam cernimus. Iam Athenas deseruit, iam a Roma recessit, iam Parisius praeterivit, iam ad Britanniam, insularum insignissimam quin potius microcosmum, accessit feliciter, ut se Graecis et barbaris debitoricem ostendat. (*Philobiblon*, ed. Thomas, p. 106.)

‘The admirable Minerva seems to have traversed the nations of men from end to end of the world, bravely touching on each that she might give herself to all. Already do we see that she has passed away from the Indians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, and the Greeks, the Arabians and the Latins. Already has she forsaken Athens, departed from Rome, passed by Paris, and is happily come to Britain, the noblest of islands, nay, the very microcosm, that she may show herself debtor both to Greeks and Barbarians.’ (*Philobiblon*, trans. Taylor, p. 61.)

All knowledge, says de Bury, builds on past knowledge: ‘The unwearied investigations of many [. . .] have swollen the great body of knowledge by successive increase to the vast proportions which we behold. [. . .] The creeds we chant are the sweatings of the Greeks.’³² Even the great Aristotle ‘had seen through the sacred books of the Hebrews, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Persians also, and the Medes [. . .] Receiving their sayings that were rightly spoken, he smoothed down the rough, cut away the superfluous, supplied the lacking, and blotted out the erroneous. [. . .] For no one alone ever created any science; [. . .] What would Vergil, the most excellent poet of the Latins, have done had he not plundered Theocritus, Lucretius and Homer?’³³ *Philobiblon* therefore engages with the essential elements of humanist scholarship – the value and perils of translation, crucial knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, and a certainty that England will be the ultimate inheritor of classical knowledge.

Beryl Smalley concludes her learned and informative work on the English friars and classical learning by emphasizing the discontinuity between the scholarly classicism of English theologians in the early fourteenth century and the world of early humanist exploration in Italy. She notes the role of the Black Death and the power of English scholasticism,

³² *Philobiblon*, trans. Taylor, pp. 63, 65.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

as well as alternative lines of inquiry – mathematics and theology – in arresting or preventing what might have become early humanism in England.³⁴ But even as she remarks the absence in England of a class of university-trained urban professional men who had time, money and leisure to write, debate and research, she overlooks the emergence of those whom Anne Middleton subsequently termed the ‘new men’ of Richard II’s court. The circle of courtly writers, clerks and scholars who peopled Chaucer’s world constituted an English equivalent of what Smalley sought but could not find in merchant or legal communities in England. Middleton describes these new men as turning away from love as individual desire and longing, men who created a literature designed to ‘exemplify an ideal of communal responsibility [. . .] an altruistic and outward-turning form of love that might be called “common love”, framing it in a ‘public poetry focused on felicity, and peaceful, harmonious existence’.³⁵

In many ways, the problem of continuity between medieval classicism and early humanism evokes mid-twentieth century debates about the relationship or lack of relationship between Lollardy and the Protestant Reformation in sixteenth-century England. In both cases, the linearity of historical narrative belies the rhizome-like spread of ideas. New shoots appear adventitiously, depending on circumstance and conditions, but they are all part of one plant. Richard de Bury’s writing and attitudes with regard to the treasures to be found in the classics open the way to appropriation and adaptation, both essential elements of Chaucer’s and Gower’s vernacular art. Above all Chaucer, particularly in the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women*, positions himself as a continual seeker after old books, anxious to hear their words as the keys to remembrance of voices, languages and ideas long past, waiting to be resurrected and invited into the present.³⁶

³⁴ Smalley, *English Friars*, pp. 300–7.

³⁵ A. Middleton, ‘The Idea of Public Poetry in the Reign of Richard II’, *Speculum* 53 (1978), 94–114 (pp. 95–6).

³⁶ On the relationship between de Bury’s bibliophilia and Chaucer’s love of books, see C. Collette, *Rethinking Chaucer’s Legend of Good Women* (York, 2014), pp. 11–32.

The Reception of Italian Political Theory in Northern England: Bartolus of Saxoferrato and Giles of Rome in York

Michele Campopiano

Among the cultural traits shared across European countries in the Middle Ages, one of the most prominent elements of their common classical inheritance is often forgotten by scholars: Roman law.¹ Commentaries on aspects of the law were produced in many European countries by the leading thinkers of the period, whose works had considerable influence upon the decisions of kings and governments. This chapter focuses upon some less well known evidence for the reception of Italian legal and political works in the northern English city of York in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, where the library of John Neuton, treasurer of York Minster, demonstrates the importance of the works of Bartolus of Saxoferrato and Giles of Rome to leading English intellectuals and practitioners of the day. The scope of the chapter is limited to the evidence concerning Neuton's library, providing a case study for further work on the holdings of the other medieval libraries in York.

The medieval study of law was based in particular on what came to be called the *Corpus iuris civilis* ('corpus of civil law'), a collection of key texts of jurisprudence assembled under the emperor Justinian between 529 and 534.² In the Middle Ages, this corpus 'provided an articulated language for the public dimension of human activity necessary for a concept of political life', defining concepts such as *res publica* (literally

¹ The bibliography on this topic is very broad. See for example C. Radding and A. Ciaralli, *The Corpus iuris civilis in the Middle Ages: Manuscripts and Transmission from the Sixth Century to the Juristic Revival* (Leiden, 2007); M. Bretone, *Geschichte des Römischen Rechts. Von den Anfängen bis Justinian* (Munich, 1992); P. Vinogradoff, *Roman Law in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1968); P. Koschaker, *Europa und das römische Recht* (Munich, 1966).

² For an edition of this corpus, see *Corpus iuris civilis*, ed. T. Mommsen and P. Krüger (Hildesheim, 1889). Included in the *Corpus* was the *Digest* or anthology of works by Roman jurists, known to medieval scholars in three sections, to be mentioned further below: the *Digestum vetus*, *Digestum novum*, and *Digestum infortiatum*.

'public affairs', the commonwealth) and *utilitas publica* ('the common good').³ The compilation was at the centre of the activity of medieval commentators, starting with the interlinear glosses by Irnerius, who taught in Bologna probably from the end of the eleventh century. Bologna became the major centre for the study of Roman law, as exemplified by the activity of the so-called Four Doctors of Bologna and of Accursius (d. c. 1263), who compiled some of the earlier glosses in the so-called *glossa ordinaria*. Drawing on Roman tradition, medieval commentators built theories of political relationships.⁴

One of the theorists who built on the work of these illustrious predecessors was Bartolus de Saxoferrato (Bartolo da Sassoferrato in Italian, 1313/14–57), regarded as one of the most influential jurists of the Middle Ages.⁵ Bartolus studied civil law with Cino da Pistoia, taught law in Pisa and Perugia and was a prolific author. Among his many works were significant political treatises such as the *Tractatus de Guelphis et Gebellinis*, the *De regimine civitatis* and the *De tyranno*,⁶ and he also commented on the Roman laws and juridical thought contained in the *Corpus iuris civilis*. With regard to this last, Bartolus's work drew not just on the *Corpus* itself but also on the medieval tradition of commentary which had developed from the eleventh century. His critical writing was developed in close connection with his teaching activities, and the texts were then diffused through the *pecia* system.⁷

Bartolus's activity as a commentator was probably the aspect of his work destined to have the strongest impact: we can count nearly fifty printed editions of his commentaries before 1600, and there were

³ J. P. Canning, 'Ideas of the State in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Commentators on the Roman Law', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 33 (1983), 1–27 (p. 2).

⁴ On this topic too the bibliography is extensive: essential references are still represented by F. Calasso, *I Glossatori e la teoria della sovranità* (Milan, 1957) and W. Ullmann, *Law and Politics in the Middle Ages: An Introduction to the Sources of Medieval Political Ideas*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 31–50.

⁵ F. Calasso, 'Bartolo da Sassoferrato', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. VI (Roma, 1964), pp. 640–69; see also F. Treggiari, *Le ossa di Bartolo. Contributo alla storia della tradizione giuridica perugina* (Perugia, 2009); M. Ryan, 'Bartolus of Sassoferrato and Free Cities', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 10 (2000), 65–89.

⁶ D. Quaglioni, *Politica e diritto nel Trecento italiano. Il De tyranno di Bartolo da Sassoferrato (1314–1357)* (Florence, 1983).

⁷ S. Lepsius, *Der Richter und die Zeugen. Eine Untersuchung anhand des Tractatus testimoniorum des Bartolus von Sassoferrato* (Frankfurt am Main, 2003), pp. 101–2; Quaglioni, *Politica e diritto*, p. 90. On methodological problems concerning the study of medieval juridical manuscripts, see M. Ascheri, 'I manoscritti giuridici tardomedievali: alcune ricerche recenti, alcune priorità', in *Juristische Buchproduktion im Mittelalter*, ed. V. Colli (Frankfurt am Main, 2002), pp. 3–39.

probably more.⁸ There are also many surviving manuscripts, around ninety-five, containing Bartolus's commentary on the *Digestum novum* alone.⁹ Some of these found their way into the library of John Neuton, treasurer of York Minster.¹⁰ Born around 1350, Neuton had undertaken legal studies, gaining his Bachelor of Civil Law degree by the end of 1375 (probably in Cambridge) and his doctorate in Civil Law by the end of 1379. He was also lecturing as an inceptor in civil law at Cambridge by 1378. He became a canon of York in 1385 (where he stayed as residentiary canon) and was appointed by Thomas Arundel as presiding judge of the episcopal consistory, vicar-general of the diocese, and treasurer of the minster in York. In 1393, he was involved in royal business for the negotiation of peace with France, and he then became vicar-general to Richard Scrope, archbishop of York. Neuton was therefore a significant figure in the struggle between Church and monarchy that marked the beginning of the reign of Henry IV in 1399.

Bartolus in York

In 1414 John Neuton left in his will a collection of books which was to be crucial for the development of the cathedral library in York. He bequeathed thirty-five manuscripts to York Minster and sixteen manuscripts to future descendants of his brother Thomas.¹¹ The Minster books

⁸ M. A. Panzanelli Fratoni, 'Bartolo da Sassoferrato e la stampa, ovvero la sua prima fortuna editoriale', in *Bartolo da Sassoferrato nella cultura europea tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*, ed. V. Crescenzi and G. Rossi (Sassoferrato, 2015), pp. 253–84 (pp. 277–83); S. Lepsius, 'Bartolus' Auseinandersetzung mit dem *Digestum novum*: zwischen Lectura und Commentum', in *Bartolo da Sassoferrato nel VII centenario della nascita: diritto, politica, società. Atti del L Convegno Storico Internazionale, Todi, Perugia, 13–16 ottobre 2013* (Spoleto, 2014), pp. 601–29 (p. 603); E. Casamassima, *Iter Germanicum* (Florence, 1971); idem, 'Note sui manoscritti di Bartolo nelle biblioteche tedesche', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 79 (1961), 169–238.

⁹ Lepsius, 'Bartolus' Auseinandersetzung', p. 607.

¹⁰ For a short biography of John Neuton, see H. Jeans, 'More about John Neuton', in *1414: John Neuton and the Re-Foundation of York Minster Library*, ed. H. Vorholt and P. Young (University of York, 2014), <https://hoaportal.york.ac.uk/hoaportal/yml1414essay.jsp?id=5> [accessed 17 June 2017]; J. A. Brundage, 'Neuton, John (c. 1350–1414)', in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition (Oxford, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com>.

¹¹ York Minster, Archives of the Chapter of York, L2 (4), ff. 168v–170v; M. Campopiano, 'Neuton's Will', in *1414: John Neuton*, ed. Vorholt and Young; *Testamenta eboracensia, or Wills registered at York*, ed. J. Raine, Surtees Society 4 (London, 1836), i, pp. 364–71; The Latin Project, *The Testamentary Circle of Thomas de Dalby, Archdeacon of Richmond, d. 1400* (York, 2002), pp. 66–74. The section

were to 'help in the making of a library', and if his brother's descendants did not require the books that were left to them, these too were to pass to the Minster – though a number of them, as we shall see, ended up at Peterhouse, one of the medieval colleges of the University of Cambridge.

Among the books which Neuton left to the Minster were Bartolus's commentary on the *Digestum novum*, now MS XVI. P. 6 in the Minster Library, and Cino da Pistoia's commentary on the *Codex*, now MS XVI. P. 8 (as we read in Neuton's will: 'Liber Chini pistoriensis super codicem [. . .] librum domini Bartholi super Digestum nouum'). As mentioned above, Cino da Pistoia (1270–1336/7) had been Bartolus's teacher, and Bartolus's work shows considerable continuity with that of Cino.¹² The latter taught in Siena (1321–2 and 1325–6), Perugia (1326–30 and 1332–3) and Naples (1330–1). Author of *Lectura in codicem* and *Lectura in Digestum vetus*, he was also a poet and friend of Dante.

Some of the books bequeathed by Neuton were for the use of any sons of his brother Thomas who would study law: 'My books both of civil and of canon law [. . .] in one chest in the vestibule of the cathedral church of York'. Among these were a further two manuscripts of works by Bartolus de Saxoferrato, MSS XVI. P. 5 and XVI. P. 7 in the Minster library.¹³ These manuscripts can be said to represent the *Lecturae ordinariae*, the foundational works for the study of Roman law. The three Bartolus manuscripts owned by Neuton, XVI. P. 5, XVI. P. 6 and XVI. P. 7, were all copied in Italy and were among a collection of Italian books in Neuton's library¹⁴.

Bartolus's works were of course not unknown in Britain in the early fifteenth century, although they were not common currency at the time of Neuton. The fifteenth-century catalogue of the library of Saint Mary's Abbey in York mentions Cino da Pistoia's work ('Chinus super totum corpus iuris civilis'),¹⁵ but not Bartolus's, although it contains several

relating to Peterhouse is printed in *Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues 10: The University and College Libraries of Cambridge*, ed. P. Clarke and R. Lovatt (London, 2002), pp. 721–2.

¹² P. Weimar, 'Cinus de Sighibuldis', in *Juristen. Ein biographisches Lexikon von der Antike bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. M. Stolleis (Munich, 2001), p. 133; G. M. Monti, *Cino da Pistoia giurista. Con bibliografia e tre appendici di documenti inediti* (Città di Castello, 1924).

¹³ N. Ramsay, 'The Minster Bequest', in *1414: John Neuton*, ed. Vorholt and Young; idem, 'Law', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. III, 1100–1400, ed. R. M. Thomson and N. J. Morgan (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 250–90.

¹⁴ For a short description of these manuscripts, see *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries, Volume IV, Paisley–York*, ed. N. R. Ker and A. J. Piper (Oxford, 1992), pp. 768–70.

¹⁵ *English Benedictine Libraries: The Shorter Catalogues*, ed. R. Sharpe and A. I. Doyle (London, 1996), p. 740.

volumes of the *Corpus iuris civilis*.¹⁶ MS XVI. P. 5 contains Bartolus's *Lectura super codice*, a study of the Roman imperial constitutions assembled under Justinian (the so-called *Codex*; Justinian reigned 527–65). It is a large paper manuscript (440 x 295 mm). It shows different watermarks, one representing a horn with a cord, similar to a watermark attested in Ferrara in 1401.¹⁷ Another watermark represents a basilisk, with eyes and two paws with three claws, similar to a watermark attested in Ferrara in 1397.¹⁸ The text is written in an Italian *cursiva libraria* of quick execution, as we can see from several features such as the *l*, the *h* and the *d* with looped ascenders, cursive *s* and round *a*. The manuscript has paraphs in red and blue and *litterae notabiliores*, pen-flourished initials, also in red and blue; among these can be observed a curiously triangular-shaped *I* (e.g. fol. 19v). Running titles are provided by an English hand.

MSS XVI. P. 6 and XVI. P. 7 contain Bartolus's study of two parts of the Digest or Pandects (the so-called *Digestum vetus* and *Digestum novum*), a compilation of sentences of Roman jurists. Like XVI. P. 5, XVI. P. 6 is a paper manuscript and is of a similar size (420 x 295 mm). The text is written in two columns. The script is essentially a *cursiva libraria*, but already shows predominantly a loopless *d* which was to become more and more common in the fifteenth century.¹⁹ The letter *l* is also predominantly loopless: the script resembles a *hybrida*. The script shows similar initials to MS XVI. P. 5, and among these one notes the same unusual triangular-shaped initial *I* as we find in the commentary of the *Codex*. Running titles are provided by an English hand. Among the watermarks we find the same basilisk as in XVI. P. 5.

MS XVI. P. 7 is also a paper manuscript, of a similar size to the two preceding ones (433 x 290 mm). The text is written in two columns, in a very similar script to XVI. P. 6 and with similar initials. MS XVI. P. 7 shows some signs that could be *pecia* marks, partially eliminated in the process of cutting the edges when the manuscript was rebound. It also displays the same watermark representing a basilisk. Regarding date and authorship of the manuscript, we read on fol. 278r:

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 741.

¹⁷ It can be identified with the watermark nr 119507 of the Piccard database, *Wasserzeichensammlung Piccard/The Piccard Watermark Collection*, ed. P. Rückert and G. Maier (Stuttgart, 2006), <https://www.piccard-online.de/start.php> [accessed 20 August 2017].

¹⁸ It can be identified with Briquet nr 2635. The Briquet database for watermarks has been consulted online, http://www.ksbm.oead.ac.at/_scripts/php/BR.php [accessed 20 August 2017].

¹⁹ A. Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books: From the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 145. I have tried to follow Derolez's nomenclature for the different typologies of scripts.

Completa sub incarnationis anno domini nostri Ihesu Christi millesimo quadringentesimo primo, die vigesimo quinto mensis iunii hora vespereorum, per me Petrum de Colonia nunc habitatorem terre Montisbellii comitatus Bon[oniensis].

‘Completed in the year of the incarnation of our lord Jesus Christ 1401, the 25th of June at the hour of Vespers, by me, Peter of Cologne, now living in Montebello in the county of Bologna.’

The three manuscripts all include indications of the divisions of the work into books by adding the corresponding Roman numerals in the top margin. Indications of the content have been added in the top corner of the recto of each folio, usually copying rubrics present in the text. The manuscripts are all written in readable but quickly executed scripts which make use of a large number of abbreviations, particularly for technical terms. The similarities in script and decoration point to a common workshop or at least area of production. They show many similarities to other Italian juridical manuscripts of the period, including low and quick forms of execution, with simplified *semitextualis* or *cursiva*.²⁰ A look at the juridical manuscripts of the Collegio di Spagna of Bologna, such as MS 269, reveals strikingly similar features. The latter was written at the beginning of the fifteenth century. It is a paper manuscript and has a similar size (433 x 292mm) to the three Bartolus manuscripts owned by Neuton. The text is written in two columns in a *rotunda libraria* with red and blue paraphs and with red and blue pen-flourished initials. This Bologna manuscript also contains a copy of the *Lectura super prima parte Infortiati* by Bartolus. There are suggestive links, then, between the three Bartolus manuscripts owned by John Neuton and the production of legal manuscripts in Bologna.

Taken together, the three Bartolus manuscripts in York constitute important evidence for the study of medieval law in Britain and Italy. But another interesting case of Anglo-Italian learning is also provided by the fourth law manuscript listed in Neuton's will: York Minster, MS XVI. P. 8. As previously mentioned, this manuscript contains a commentary on the *Codex*, the Roman imperial constitutions assembled under Justinian, written by Cino da Pistoia. It is written on parchment, but its size (436 x 296 mm) is similar to the dimensions of the three manuscripts of Bartolus's work and it is written in two columns. Although it was produced in England, an attempt has been made in the book to imitate the style of initials used in Italian books. The text begins with an elaborate nine-line initial (fol. 1r) and there are running titles similar to

²⁰ On these manuscripts, see *I codici del Collegio di Spagna di Bologna*, ed. D. Maffei, E Cortese, A. García y García, C. Piana and G. Rossi (Milan, 1991).

those in Neuton's copies of Bartolus's works surviving at the Minster. It also shows similar initials, included the characteristic triangular-shaped *I*. The manuscript is, however, written by an English hand, a secretary hand heavily influenced by *textualis*.²¹ It displays both looped and loopless *d*, and shows a two-compartment *a* and a round *e*, both remnants of the *anglicana* style. It also displays six foliate initials.

It is almost certain, then, that these four manuscripts of works by Cino and Bartolus are part of the same project, with three Italian manuscripts of Bartolus produced in Bologna and annotated in England and the Cino manuscript copied in England from Italian models. Annotations to the Cino manuscript refer to Bartolus's commentaries (e.g. fol. 25r: 'Hic Bartholus supra LII ff'), showing that the annotators were familiar with manuscripts of Bartolus's work. It is clear that the English copyists who produced the Cino manuscript were looking at one or more Italian exemplars and that they 'upgraded' their exemplars. While Neuton's Italian copies are essentially university books, probably connected to the *pecia* system, the English codex is more of a luxury copy, made on parchment and more heavily decorated. The Italian manuscripts were therefore seen as models to be treated with the greatest respect.

Not all of Neuton's Italian manuscripts remained in York; three of them are now at Peterhouse in Cambridge. One of these, Peterhouse, MS 36, is a copy of Bartolus's commentary on the *Digestum infortiatum*, the third part of the Digest, which, together with the two volumes in York (XVI. P. 6 and XVI. P. 7), constitute a complete edition of Bartolus's important study of the Digest. This is also likely a *pecia* copy, although this time on parchment, not on paper, and written in a more elaborate script, also connected to the University of Bologna. The manuscript includes the annotation on fol. 269v: 'Bartholus super Digestum Infortiatum ex dono magistri Iohannis Newton thesaurarii ecclesie Cathedralis Ebor[acensis]' ('Bartolus on the *Digestum Infortiatum* as the gift of Master John Neuton treasurer of the cathedral church of York'). The manuscript is written in an Italian *semigothica libraria*, with round *a*, the *l* tending to curve (almost like a *c*), and a '2'-shaped *r* after curves. It is probably a mid-fourteenth century specimen.

In these four manuscripts of Bartolus's work, the frequent annotations reveal an assiduous study of what Bartolus himself wrote. Some of the notes comment on the content of corresponding passages in order to facilitate future consultation of the work, for example in XVI. P. 6: 'De privilegiis creditorum rubrica' (fol. 144r). Some of the annotations concern directly the relationship between law and clerics. In the Minster

²¹ Derolez, *Palaeography*, p. 160–2.

manuscript XVI. P. 5, we read the note, 'utrum statuta et consuetudines locorum ligent clericos' ('whether the local statutes and customs bind the clerics') (fol. 5r). The same hand adds, 'innuit ergo a contrario quod ea que non sunt contra libertatem ecclesie et personas valeant' ('he hints therefore to the contrary that those [statutes] which are not against the liberty of the Church and persons are valid'). This hand is probably English, writing in *anglicana*, as we may deduce in particular from the high angular *v*, loops closing the upper strokes of *b* and *l*, the high *a* with a closed upper lobe,²² and the sigma *s*.²³ Bartolus's text actually says, 'quod non valeant statuta laycorum contra libertatem ecclesiarum et earum personas' ('that the statutes of the laity are not valid against the liberty of the Church and their persons') (fol. 5r). This does not mean that statutes can never be valid against clerics: it just means that they are not valid when they touch upon the specific privileges sanctioned by the liberty of the Church.

Other annotations concern the role of the statutes and customs outside their territory: 'an statuta vel consuetudines porrigant effectum suum extra territorium' ('whether statutes and customs have their effect outside their territory') (fol. 5v). Bartolus explains that a statute is valid if pertaining to the common good ('pertinent ad publicam utilitatem'). Crimes are punished according to the statutes and customs of the city where they are committed. Decisions taken by officers are not valid outside the territory where their jurisdiction operates.

Several remarks concern the freedom of the Church, probably also written by English hands: one begins 'Libertas ecclesiastica' (fol. 19v), annotating a passage on the fact that the statute granted to the Church by the emperors cannot be influenced by local statutes. Another refers to 'Libertas ecclesie' (fol. 23v), in a hand which displays a high *a*, with a closed upper lobe. This annotation refers to another passage written against customs which are not valid because they work against the freedoms of the Church. The Italian commentators on Roman law (including Bartolus) tended to reflect the Italian city statutes which protected *libertas ecclesie* and ecclesiastical jurisdiction (such as the statutes of Perugia of 1342).²⁴ Bartolus himself argues that rules established against ecclesiastical privileges are not valid.²⁵

²² Derolez, *Palaeography*, pp. 136–40; as examples compare with tables 80 (dated 1373) and 81 (dated 1377–96).

²³ L. R. Mooney and E. Stubbs, *Scribes and the City. London Guildhall Clerks and the Dissemination of Middle English Literature 1375–1425* (York, 2013), pp. 21–3, 43–4.

²⁴ O. Condorelli, 'Bartolo e il diritto canonico', in *Bartolo da Sassoferrato nel VII centenario della nascita*, pp. 463–557, pp. 552–7; Canning, 'Ideas of the State', p. 22.

²⁵ Quaglioni, *Politica e diritto*, p. 15.

Other remarks concern the authority of princes and emperors, 'de mandatis principis' (fol. 32v), regarding cases where someone does not believe that an officer has a *mandatum principis*. Many further annotations concern administrative issues which were no doubt relevant to the administration of the property of a wealthy church like York Minster. Thus we find in XVI. P. 6 terms such as 'usufructuarius', 'feudatarius emphetus', 'colonus inquilinus', 'prealtus rector' (all on fol. 8r). The low *v*-shaped *r*, the double *f* for capital *f*, the looped *d*, the final sigma *s* all point again to an English hand, writing in *anglicana* script. In Bartolus's commentary on the *Digestum novum* (XVI. P. 7) we find on fol. 3r annotations such as 'civitas bononiensis', 'civitas alexandrina', 'consuetudo, privilegium', corresponding to the passage in which Bartolus discusses the validity of city privileges and statutes. The script of these annotations, with looped *b* and *l*, sigma *s*, low *v*-shaped *r*, all point again to an English hand writing in *anglicana*, probably from the beginning of the fifteenth century, in Neuton's time.²⁶

Bartolus's texts were read in connection with current social and juridical issues in York, as is made clear in particular by an annotation found on fol. 10r in XVI. P. 7 (the manuscript of the *Lectura digesti veteris*): 'nota pro quadam constitutione provincie Ebor[acensis] que incipit Sciendum etc.' ('note for a certain constitution of the province of York that begins Sciendum etc.'). This annotation concerns the section of Bartolus's commentary in which he describes how statutes which include commands with direct, immediate effects cannot maintain their validity in the future. Another example of the annotator's reading of this text in connection with contemporary English historical circumstance is given by a note on fol. 20r, 'Videte filii [*sic*] regis Anglie Henrici quarti' ('see the sons of the king of England Henry IV'), although this last reading is dubious given the ambiguous abbreviations used. This annotation is again in a typical *anglicana* hand, with low *v*-shaped *r*, '8'-shaped *g*, looped *l*, and angular *v* with a curve bending to the right.

The manuscripts and their historical context

The survival of this remarkable juridical library in York prompts us to ask ourselves why Neuton had developed this interest in Bartolus and the political and juridical theories he wrote about. It is clear that these texts were primarily regarded as essential to the study of law: the fact that some of them were left in Neuton's will to the sons of his brother

²⁶ Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, pp. 41–6.

Thomas to aid them in undertaking legal studies confirms this. But another perspective on the interest that these manuscripts inspired may be gained by considering Neuton's connection to the archbishop of York, Richard Scrope. Scrope had studied law at Cambridge, being a licentiate in civil law by 1375 and becoming doctor of both civil and canon law in 1379. He was even appointed chancellor of the university in 1378.²⁷ Scrope also had a strong connection to Italy: he spent a considerable amount of time in Rome, where he was appointed papal chaplain and auditor of causes in 1381, and protonotary in 1386.²⁸

More significantly, Scrope was an active figure in the turbulent events that shook Britain in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.²⁹ When Richard II lost his throne to Henry IV in 1399, Scrope was prominent in the negotiations with Richard II for the transfer of authority.³⁰ Scrope also attended the parliament at Coventry in 1404, where the commons proposed the confiscation of Church property to meet current military expenses.³¹ However, it is particularly in connection with Scrope's participation in the rising against Henry IV in 1405 that the political and juridical ideas expressed in the commentaries of Bartolus become telling. As Mark Ormrod has written, 'The Yorkshire rising of 1405 and the leadership provided in it by Richard Scrope, archbishop of York, were phenomena of great significance in the political and cultural life of the city of York, of the north, and of the kingdom of England as a whole during the fifteenth century.'³²

To understand the political and ideological claims beyond the rebellion we can look at one of the putative manifestos of the rebellion – the only one which, as Ormrod has affirmed, can plausibly be associated with the uprising of 1405. This is the so-called 'York articles', transmitted in Latin by Thomas Walsingham but probably written originally in the vernacular and posted on the doors of the churches of the city of

²⁷ R. N. Swanson, 'Bureaucrat, Prelate, Traitor, Martyr: Sketching Scrope', in *Richard Scrope: Archbishop, Rebel, Martyr*, ed. P. J. P. Goldberg (Donington, 2007), pp. 17–27 (p. 19).

²⁸ Swanson, 'Bureaucrat, Prelate', p. 20.

²⁹ On the role of Scrope, see in particular *Richard Scrope*, ed. Goldberg, especially Goldberg, 'Introduction', pp. 1–16.

³⁰ Swanson, 'Bureaucrat, Prelate', p. 26.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

³² W. M. Ormrod, 'An Archbishop in Revolt: Richard Scrope and the Yorkshire Rising of 1405', in *Richard Scrope*, ed. Goldberg, pp. 28–44 (p. 28); on the rebellion, see also P. N. McNiven, 'The Betrayal of Archbishop Scrope', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 54 (1971), 173–213. For the political context of that period, see W. M. Ormrod, *Political Life in Medieval England, 1300–1450* (New York, 1995), pp. 20–2, 26–7.

York.³³ The manifesto focuses on the burdensome taxation of both laity and clergy and on the fact that experienced men have been replaced by new men in government offices.³⁴ As Ormrod has shown, 'The Scrope rebellion took place against a backdrop of very high rates of indirect and direct taxation.' The province of York, for example, had decided to lower the taxable minimum of liability to clerical tenths in 1404.³⁵ The clergy was particularly concerned about possible tax pressure and likely attacks on their privileges more generally. In June 1404, the York convocation requested a moratorium on the conducting of inquisitions and distrains under royal commission concerning the rights and lands of the Church in the northern provinces.³⁶ When the rebellion broke out, the York clergy were prominent participants.³⁷

The 'York articles' of the 1405 rebellion are mainly concerned with defending the *libertas ecclesiae*. We read in the first one:

Primo – Propter malum regimen quod est in regno, emendandum, secundum cursum veritatis et iustitiae, et ordinandum pro importabilibus oneribus quae currunt in omnes status cleri, et reformandum iniurias et derogationes factas statibus, tam spiritualibus quam temporalibus, in salvationem et libertatem Sanctae Ecclesiae, quae semper antea extitit ordinata et visitata ad placendum Domino.

'First – because of the evil regime which is in the kingdom, [let there be] a correcting to the course of truth and justice, and an ordaining in relation to the unbearable burdens which run across all the ranks of the clergy, and a reforming of the injustices and derogations made to both spiritual and temporal ranks, for the salvation and liberty of the Holy Church, which before was always ordained and sent to please the Lord.'³⁸

This stand on behalf of ecclesiastical privilege came to occupy an important place in the memory of the northern clergy. The *Martyrium Ricardi*

³³ Ormrod, 'Archbishop in Revolt', p. 31.

³⁴ D. Biggs, 'Archbishop Scrope's Manifesto of 1405: "Naïve Nonsense" or Reflections of Political Reality?', *Journal of Medieval History* 33 (2007), 358–71; see also W. M. Ormrod, 'The Rebellion of Archbishop Scrope and the Tradition of Opposition to Royal Taxation', in *The Reign of Henry IV: Rebellion and Survival, 1403–1413*, ed. G. Dodd and D. Biggs (York, 2008), pp. 162–79.

³⁵ Ormrod, 'Archbishop in Revolt', p. 37.

³⁶ Ormrod, 'Archbishop in Revolt', p. 40.

³⁷ Ormrod, 'Archbishop in Revolt', p. 41; C. D. Liddy, 'William Frost, the City of York and Scrope's Rebellion of 1405', in *Richard Scrope*, ed. Goldberg, pp. 64–85.

³⁸ *Chronica Monasterii S. Albani. Johannis de Trokelowe, et Henrici de Blaneforde, monachorum S. Albani, necnon quorundam anonymorum: Chronica et annales regnantibus Henrico Tertio, Edwardo Primo, Edwardo Secundo, Ricardo Secundo, et Henrico Quarto*, ed. H. T. Riley (London, 1866), pp. 403–4.

Archiepiscopi, written shortly after Henry IV's death in 1413, reports the articles of complaint that Scrope alleged against Henry IV: 'Optavit idem archiepiscopus, Ricardus Scrope, quod [. . .] ecclesia Anglicana haberet suas libertates, privilegia et consuetudines secundum justas leges regni Angliae ab antiquo usitatas' ('Archbishop Richard Scrope wanted [. . .] the English Church to have its liberties, privileges, and customary rents and dues according to the just laws of the kingdom of England which have been in effect since ancient times').³⁹

Neuton was a residentiary canon of York Minster, locally active, who showed genuine concern for the pastoral life of the church.⁴⁰ After the execution of Scrope, Neuton petitioned Henry IV for the chapter to proceed to the election of his successor.⁴¹ It is very tempting to hypothesize that the learned canon may have discussed with Scrope the matter of Bartolus's position on *libertas ecclesiae* and administration. This temptation becomes even stronger if we consider other books owned by Neuton which were left to Peterhouse in Cambridge. Among these books we find the *De regimine principum* by Giles of Rome. This was an extremely influential text: as well as there being nearly three hundred extant manuscripts of the Latin text, several adaptations of it were made in a number of vernacular languages.⁴² The text was already very well known in Britain, reaching England no later than 1313 when Bishop Ralph de Baldock of London bequeathed a copy of the *De regimine* to his cathedral chapter.⁴³ It is also possible that a *Liber de regimine regum* mentioned in the inventory of the Treasury of the Exchequer compiled around 1323 is a copy of Giles's work.⁴⁴ It is very likely that Augustinian

³⁹ Clement Maidstone, *Martyrium Ricardi archiepiscopi*, ed. S. K. Wright, online edition with notes and commentary (1997), <http://english.cua.edu/faculty/wright/latmaidston.cfm> [accessed 20 August 2017]. Translation from C. Maidstone, *The Martyrdom of Archbishop Richard Scrope*, trans. S. K. Wright (1997), <http://english.cua.edu/faculty/wright/maidston.cfm> [accessed 20 August 2017]. See also S. K. Wright, 'Genres of Sanctity: Literary Representations of Archbishop Scrope', and S. Rees Jones, 'Richard Scrope, the Bolton Hours and the Church of St Martin in Micklegate: Reconstructing a Holy Neighbourhood in Later Medieval York', both in *Richard Scrope*, ed. Goldberg, pp. 115–37 and pp. 214–36. See also J. W. McKenna, 'Popular Canonization as Political Propaganda: The Cult of Archbishop Scrope', *Speculum* 45 (1970), 618–23.

⁴⁰ C. Norton, 'Richard Scrope and York Minster', in *Richard Scrope*, ed. Goldberg, pp. 138–213 (p. 167).

⁴¹ Norton, 'Richard Scrope and York Minster', p. 172; R. G. Davies, 'After the Execution of Archbishop Scrope: Henry IV, the Papacy and the English Episcopate, 1405–8', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 59 (1976–7), 40–74.

⁴² C. F. Briggs, *Giles of Rome's De regimine principum. Reading and Writing Politics at Court and University, c. 1275–c.1525* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 3.

⁴³ Briggs, *Giles of Rome's De regimine*, p. 14.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

libraries played an important role in disseminating this work (Giles having been an Augustinian himself): we find three copies of the *De regimine principum* in the 1372 inventory of the library of the Augustinian friars of York.⁴⁵ Certainly the book helped to define ideas of kingship in late medieval England.⁴⁶ Richard II commissioned a translation of the work into Middle English by John of Trevisa.⁴⁷ An exemplary king as described by Giles would have helped to heal the wounds of the troubled first half of the fifteenth century, as Briggs has argued,⁴⁸ and the greatest proliferation of manuscripts of Giles's text in fact covers the period between 1380 and 1430.⁴⁹ Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*, written for Henry V, is largely based on Giles's work.⁵⁰ Hoccleve says explicitly that he will draw on Giles: 'And of Gyles of Regiment / Of Princes, plotmeel thynke I to translate.'⁵¹

The copy of the *De regimine principum* left by Neuton to Peterhouse (Cambridge, Peterhouse, MS 233) is written in a south-European *rotunda*, probably Italian (or maybe southern French, as could be argued on the basis of the tironian *et*, dotted *y*, and the *as* used by the copyist), and it was likely written at the beginning of the fourteenth century (the shaft of the *t* sometimes does not project above the headstroke; *st* ligature; almost round *d*). The manuscript is heavily annotated, clearly by English hands, writing probably at the beginning of the fifteenth century (the various hands show many elements in common with the older *anglicana* script). They display double *f* to indicate capital *f*; *b*, *d*, *h*, *l* with a closed loop, closed *s*, and in particular closed *e* (see for example, 'idem probat de iusticia speciali', fol. 35r). The manuscript contains several annotations concerning the figure of the tyrant: on fol. 15r we read: 'nota nomina tirannorum' ('notice the names of the tyrants'). On fol. 216v we find annotations (e.g. 'quomodo rex distat a tyranno', 'how the king differs from the tyrant') with reference to another passage in which Giles of Rome explains the difference between king and tyrant:

⁴⁵ T. Webber and A. G. Watson, *The Libraries of the Augustinian Canons* (London, 1998), pp. 11–154 (pp. 69, 72, 82); M. R. James, *The Catalogue of the Library of the Augustinian Friars at York, now first Edited from the Manuscript at Trinity College, Dublin* (Cambridge, 1909).

⁴⁶ Ormrod, *Political Life*, pp. 64–5.

⁴⁷ Briggs, *Giles of Rome's De regimine*, p. 61. For the edition see *The Governance of Kings and Princes: John Trevisa's Middle English Translation of the De regimine principum of Aegidius Romanus*, ed. D. C. Fowler (New York, 1997).

⁴⁸ Briggs, *Giles of Rome's De regimine*, p. 63.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵⁰ D. Pearsall, 'Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*: The Poetics of Royal Self-Representation', *Speculum* 69 (1994), 386–410 (p. 410).

⁵¹ Thomas Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, ed. C. R. Blyth (Kalamazoo, 1999), vv. 2052–53, p. 99.

Est enim differentia inter regem et tyrannum, ut patebit in 3. lib., cum determinabitur de regimine Regni. Nam rex proprie est, qui intendit bonum Regni, et bonum commune: si autem intendit bonum proprium, hoc est ex consequenti. Tyrannus vero econverso, principaliter intendit bonum privatum: si autem intendit bonum publicum, hoc est ex consequenti, ut in quantum ex bono communi evenit ei aliquod bonum proprium.⁵²

‘There is truly a difference between the king and the tyrant, as will become clear in Book 3, when the ruling of the kingdom will be discussed. For the king is properly him that strives for the good of the kingdom, and for the common good: if, however, he [also] directs himself towards the private good, this is as a consequence thereof. The tyrant truly, on the contrary, concerns himself principally with the private good: if, however, he aims for the common good, this is as a consequence, insofar as some private good comes to him from the common good.

As noted by Diego Quaglioni, in Bartolus as in Giles of Rome the *bonum commune* and the *publica utilitas* are the prevailing criteria used to distinguish the legitimate ruler from the tyrant.⁵³ Bartolus’s commentary on the *Codex* focuses on the invalidity of all acts that emanate from tyranny. It seems not at all unlikely that Neuton (and perhaps Scrope himself) would have read both Bartolus and Giles of Rome in Neuton’s library, to find arguments against the pressure of Henry IV’s challenge to the customs and statutes of York and the liberty of the northern Church.

Giles’s text also provides other points of connection with Bartolus’s arguments, such as a number of annotations in the Peterhouse manuscript concerning Giles’s notion of justice. For example, we read on fol. 33v, ‘iustitia continet urbanitates’ (‘justice contains civic forms of life’), which glosses the passage: ‘Sic iusticia continet urbanitates, id est civitates et regna, quia sine ea dissolvitur civitas et non possunt regna subsistere’ (‘So justice contains civic forms of life, that is to say cities and kingdoms, because without it the city is dissolved and the kingdoms cannot subsist’). Both Bartolus and Giles, therefore, provide a repertory of arguments against tyrannical intrusion into the life of cities and the Church.

⁵² Aegidii Columnae Romani. *De regimine principum* (Rome, 1607, rpt. Darmstadt, 1967), p. 23, with my translation.

⁵³ Quaglioni, *Politica e diritto*, p. 37.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that John Neuton's interest in Bartolus should be understood not simply as evidence of his understanding of the most recent developments in the Italian study of law. It should be read within the troubled political context of the beginning of the fifteenth century in Britain, and the necessity of defending city customs and the liberty of the Church against the increasing fiscal pressure and political centralization of the Lancastrian regime. I am aware of the hypothetical character of this interpretation. I hope that scholars more learned than myself in the history of Britain might consider, and strengthen or reject, this hypothesis. As a scholar of medieval Italy, however, I find another important observation emerging from my analysis of Neuton's manuscripts. In studying the connections between the British Isles and Italy in the late Middle Ages, we should shift our attention to an extent from the 'centre' (London, the court), to the other civic and religious environments of medieval Britain. Clerics such as Scrope and Neuton were able to establish their own links with productive Italian cultural centres and develop a fruitful cultural exchange with these places.

We might also mention in this context other examples of Neuton's attention to Italian cultural developments. Among his manuscripts was another now in Cambridge: Peterhouse, MS 173. This is a composite volume, that is to say a manuscript created by putting together independent quires which did not originally belong to the same production unit. The first part was written in Italy in the second half of the fourteenth century, and contains the *Historia destructionis Troiae* ('The History of the Destruction of Troy') written by the Sicilian Guido delle Colonne in 1287. This Latin work, based on the vernacular French Troy romance by Benoît de Sainte-Maure, tells the story of the Trojan War from a different perspective to that of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Its influence on English literature was considerable: Lydgate's *Troy Book* is based on it, and Chaucer himself honours the Sicilian writer by mentioning him in the *House of Fame* and the *Legend of Good Women*. Furthermore, we know from Neuton's will that he also possessed a copy of Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortunae*, one of the latter's most popular works. The evidence is clear, then, that late medieval York was in close touch with cultural developments in the rest of Europe.

Italian Firms in Late Medieval England and their Bankruptcy: Re-reading an Old History of Financial Crisis

Ignazio Del Punta

Recent financial crises, from 2007 onwards, have attracted renewed interest in a topic that had been neglected for decades, particularly in continental, but also in English-language historiography: that of the big merchant-banking companies of the late Middle Ages and the financial crises they suffered from the late thirteenth century. The eruption of the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the United States and the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008 have generated a number of articles stressing the cyclical recurrence of financial crisis in capitalistic systems or proto-capitalistic ones. Taking a long historical perspective, some of the most famous bankruptcies are those of the Florentine companies in 1344–6 and those of the Genoese bankers lending to Spanish monarchs in the late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries. But it could be claimed that the first international financial crisis actually occurred in the 1290s, due to the collapse of the Ricciardi (or Riccardi) company from Lucca, who had been for two decades Edward I's loyal bankers before entering a period of severe troubles which ultimately led to their failure in 1300.

The vicissitudes of the Ricciardi company in England and the role of Italian bankers more generally were thoroughly investigated in a series of studies published during the last decades of the twentieth century.¹ Following something of a historiographical vacuum around the topic,

¹ The first comprehensive study was that of R. W. Kaeuper, *Bankers to the Crown: The Riccardi of Lucca and Edward I* (Princeton, 1973). Other key works include: R. W. Kaeuper, 'The Frescobaldi of Florence and the English Crown', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 10 (1973), 45–95; R. A. Goldthwaite, 'Italian Bankers in Medieval England', *The Journal of European Economic History* 2 (1973), 763–71; M. Prestwich, 'Italian Merchants in Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Century England', in *The Dawn of Modern Banking*, ed. R. S. Lopez (New Haven, 1979), pp. 77–104; E. B. Fryde, 'Italian Merchants in Medieval England, c. 1270–c. 1500', in *Aspetti della vita economica medievale* (Florence, 1985), pp. 215–31; idem, *Studies in Medieval Trade and Finance* (London, 1983); E. S. Hunt, *The Medieval Super-Companies: A Study of the Peruzzi Company of Florence* (Cambridge, 1994).

a research project by the International Capital Markets Association (ICMA) based at the University of Reading, entitled 'Credit Finance in the Middle Ages: Loans to the English Crown c. 1272–1340', returned to the subject, producing a number of studies and analyses of sources concerning the royal accounts (particularly the valuable Exchequer and Wardrobe accounts).² The focus of this project is on the English monastic wool market and the system of forward contracts set up by the Italian firms, on the interest rate applied in various kind of loans, and on the vicissitudes of the principal Italian banking companies acting in England as bankers to the Crown in the period of the three Edwards – namely the Ricciardi, the Frescobaldi and the Peruzzi, Bardi and Acciaiuoli – and the reasons leading to their collapse. The wider aim is 'to apply modern economic and financial analysis to medieval sources', as stated in the presentation of the project background.³

My own recent research has focused extensively on the story of the Ricciardi company as part of a team project led by the late Arrigo Castellani: in 2005, we carried out the task of publishing the precious Ricciardi correspondence preserved in The National Archives, London.⁴ More recently, a major monograph by Richard Goldthwaite on the economic history of Florence in the Renaissance includes a section dedicated to the Florentine merchant-banking companies, particularly those of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁵ An article by Sergio Tognetti, based on a Florentine document, sheds light on an episode of the Frescobaldi bankruptcy, while contributions from Stefano Magni approach the study of the main Florentine business organizations of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries from the perspective of their

² *Accounts of the English Crown with Italian Merchant Societies, 1272–1345*, ed. A. R. Bell, C. Brooks and T. K. Moore (Chippenham, 2009); A. R. Bell, C. Brooks and P. R. Dryburgh, *The English Wool Market, c. 1230–1327* (Cambridge, 2007); A. R. Bell, C. Brooks and T. K. Moore, 'Interest in Medieval Accounts: Examples from England, 1272–1340', *History* 94 (2009), 411–33.

³ T. K. Moore, 'Credit Finance in the Middle Ages', *Economic History Society Conference 2009*, p. 1, <http://www.ehs.org.uk/events/assets/MooreFullPaper.pdf> [accessed 20 August 2017].

⁴ *Lettere dei Ricciardi di Lucca ai loro compagni in Inghilterra (1295–1303)*, ed. A. Castellani and I. Del Punta (Rome, 2005); I. Del Punta, *Mercanti e banchieri lucchesi nel Duecento* (Pisa, 2004), pp. 141–215; I. Del Punta, 'Il fallimento della compagnia Ricciardi alla fine del secolo XIII: un caso esemplare?', *Archivio Storico Italiano* 160 (2002), 221–68.

⁵ R. A. Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore, 2009). For a recent essay on the formation of large unitary merchant-banking organizations in thirteenth-century Tuscany see J. F. Padgett, 'The Emergence of Corporate Merchant-Banks in Dugento Tuscany', in *The Emergence of Organizations and Markets*, ed. Padgett and W. W. Powell (Princeton, 2013), pp. 121–67.

relations with the Mediterranean grain trade and the problems of victualling cities in late medieval Italy.⁶

Notwithstanding this revival of interest, the subject is far from being exhausted, and further work needs to be done. Sources still lie unpublished, such as the Frescobaldi correspondence;⁷ and, beyond the studies by Armando Saporì, nobody has attempted a new investigation of the Florentine merchant-banking companies of the fourteenth century, even the most important ones, based on exploitation of Florence's archival sources.⁸ Here, however, I will not discuss either the details of the history of the big firms that alternated as bankers to the English crown from about 1271 to 1344, or the specific circumstances of their bankruptcies. The space here available is clearly insufficient to retrace all the events that these companies lived through in their period of prosperity as well as during their crisis. My aim instead is to offer some considerations of the sequence of events taken as a whole.

First of all it should be noted that a direct comparison between the late medieval financial crisis and those which have dramatically affected the world's economy since 2007 makes no real sense. The differences between the financial systems of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and the liberalized, globalized system that began to assume its current form under the stimulus of the liberal reforms of the 1970s–80s (particularly thanks to the influence of Alan Greenspan),⁹ are so many and so profound that it is impossible to treat the two as equivalent.

⁶ S. Tognetti, 'Nuovi documenti sul fallimento della compagnia Frescobaldi in Inghilterra', in *Città e campagne del Basso Medioevo: Studi sulla società italiana offerti dagli allievi a Giuliano Pinto*. Biblioteca dell'Archivio storico italiano 37 (Florence, 2014), pp. 135–58. Magni's Ph.D. research focused specifically on Florence, Pisa and Orvieto as case studies: see S. Magni, 'La rete delle grandi compagnie fiorentine nel XIII e XIV secolo e lo spazio mediterraneo: alcuni problemi di ricerca', in *Imperia. Lo spazio mediterraneo dal mondo antico all'età contemporanea*, ed. G. Conte, F. Filioli Urano, V. Torreggiani and F. Zaccaro (Palermo, 2016), pp. 105–22; S. Magni, 'Politica degli approvvigionamenti e controllo del commercio dei cereali nell'Italia dei comuni nel XIII e XIV secolo: alcune questioni preliminari', *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome – Moyen Âge* 127 (2015), 1–20.

⁷ I have been working on the publication of the Frescobaldi correspondence for some years; one letter written in 1313 by a Siennese factor of the company, Biagio Aldobrandini, has been published, and I hope to publish the remaining letters in due course. See I. Del Punta, 'Una lettera da Londra ad Avignone del 1313', *Bollettino dell'Opera del Vocabolario Italiano* 13 (2008), 351–69. The document is preserved in TNA, SC 1/58, fol. 6A–6D.

⁸ See the many essays collected in A. Saporì, *Studi di storia economica*, 3 vols. (Florence, 1955); *I libri di commercio dei Peruzzi*, ed. A. Saporì (Milano, 1934).

⁹ A leading American economist, Greenspan served as chairman of the US Federal Reserve from 1987 until his retirement in 2006. He is considered something of a 'mastermind' or 'guru' of financial liberalism.

To generalize, the whole economic system of the Euro-Mediterranean space in the late Middle Ages was completely, structurally, different from the contemporary globalized economy. One could easily argue that the European economy had already changed quite significantly from that of the late Middle Ages even in the Renaissance period, not to mention the economies of eighteenth-century Europe or the West in the post-industrial revolution and colonial periods. Thousands of pages could be devoted to discussion of the general features of the Euro-Mediterranean economies of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries without in all probability arriving at a means to reconcile the positions of those analysts who might be labelled 'primitivist' and those who could be described as 'modernist'. Such a broad and complex issue can hardly be tackled here. Nevertheless, to simplify, it could be argued that even if late medieval Euro-Mediterranean economies were comparatively primitive in respect to those of modern Europe, and even if large regions and sectors of society were confined to a poor agricultural economy, by the late thirteenth century, thanks to long, slow, but steady plurisecular economic growth, there had formed – to quote the expression used by Aldo De Maddalena to describe early modern European financial elites – a kind of 'international money republic'.¹⁰

This early type of an 'international money republic' comprised only an elite minority of rich merchant-bankers and their customers, which included the most powerful monarchs, the papacy, and lay and ecclesiastical aristocrats. Around the business networks built up by the most affluent merchant-banking organizations money circulated comparatively fast and easily, often not in the form of specie, but as paper money (or 'ink money' as they used to call it) through the use of current accounts, very similar to modern ones, with overdraft facilities, through offsetting and balance transfers. Credit was very common, even at a low interest rate which applied to a kind of 'corporate loans' system of inter-bank lending among the business community itself. By the second half of the thirteenth century the Italian operators had developed refined financial techniques, and the use of 'bills of exchange' (*instrumenta ex causa cambii*), particularly associated with the Champagne fairs, had spread in the Italian cities to most ranks of the mercantile community.

Yet even the most powerful, affluent and well-organized business firms had a structural weakness, and this is a feature that can be observed with regard both to the late thirteenth-century business giants and to the Florentine 'super-companies' of the fourteenth century. They all tended to invest an extensive quota of their assets in a web of

¹⁰ *La repubblica internazionale del denaro tra XV e XVII secolo*, ed. A. De Maddalena and H. Kellenbenz (Bologna, 1986).

short, mid-term and long-term loans, often to private customers such as lay aristocrats and high clerics, mainly bishops, cardinals, abbots or influential members of cathedral chapters. The problem was that, not infrequently, the supposedly short or mid-term loans became long- or very long-term ones. Late medieval merchant-bankers were perfectly aware of the principle 'time is money', but their aristocratic customers, who had grown up with knightly values, were much less so, especially when it was they who owed money to second parties, as was often the case. We need only to consult Vendittelli's work on thirteenth-century Roman bankers and their loans to high clerics, as well as earlier studies on Sienese bankers, to realize how long it could take and how difficult it could be actually to recover the very considerable sums of money lent to bishops, cardinals and abbots. Sometimes it took these first international bankers thirty years or more to recover part of the money they had lent.¹¹ Money circulated fast and easily among affluent businessmen, but it did not circulate very fast at all outside this privileged circle.

This fact had serious implications. It meant that at the point when a financial emergency occurred for a key customer like a king, the pope or a prince, these early banks were exposed to a severe liquidity crisis. They simply lacked enough cash reserves to meet the emergency. Certainly, in cases of need companies could resort to inter-bank lending, but this was not always easy at times of international political turmoil when general conditions for trade and business were likely to be difficult. In the Ricciardi correspondence we find evidence that the company used to borrow money from other merchant-bankers, particularly at the Champagne fairs, paying an interest rate ranging from 10% to 15%. After the company had fallen into difficulties in 1294, its partners could borrow money only at 15% or 20%, while they were charging another Lucchese company, the Bettori, an annual interest rate of only 10% on

¹¹ M. Vendittelli, 'Testimonianze sui rapporti tra mercatores romani ed i vescovati di Metz e Verdun nel secolo XIII', *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria* 118 (1995), 70–99; idem, 'Mercanti romani del primo Duecento in Urbe potentes', in *Roma nei secoli XIII e XIV: Cinque saggi*, ed. É. Hubert (Rome, 1993), pp. 87–135. On Sienese bankers, see M. Cassandro, 'La banca senese nei secoli XIII e XIV', in *Banchieri e mercanti di Siena*, ed. C. M. Cipolla (Rome, 1987), pp. 107–60; M. Tangheroni, 'Siena e il commercio internazionale nel Duecento e nel Trecento', also in *Banchieri*, ed. Cipolla, pp. 21–105; M. Chiaudano, 'I Rothschild del Dugento: La Gran Tavola di Orlando Bonsignori', *Bullettino senese di storia patria* 42 (1935), 103–42; É. Jordan, 'La faillite des Buonsignori', in *Mélanges Paul Fabre: Études d'histoire du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1902), pp. 416–35. More recent studies include E. D. English, *Enterprise and Liability in Sienese Banking, 1230–1350* (Cambridge MA, 1988); R. Mucciarelli, *I Tolomei banchieri di Siena: La parabola di un casato nel XIII e XIV secolo* (Siena, 1995).

their extant debts.¹² Moreover, as soon as rumours about the financial difficulties of a company spread among the business community, fellow merchant-banking firms were less keen to risk lending it money. When news about troubles affecting the same company reached the ears of clients who had deposited significant sums with it, panic broke out and a run on the bank occurred, thus exacerbating the firm's liquidity problems. Seizure of credits and assets such as jewels and merchandise was the usual consequence of an outbreak of panic among important customers, who reacted by exploiting their political influence against the bankers in an attempt to recover their money, or at least a part of it.

On the one hand, therefore, the credit market was not well-integrated and did not function in every context smoothly enough to allow the reduction of transaction costs to a worthwhile level in all financial transactions. On the other hand, in the case of an emergency or a serious liquidity crisis there was no 'parachuting' system to enable banks in difficulty to be saved. In other words, there was no central bank ready to intervene to save banks in difficulty and nationalize them or absorb their liabilities through the issue of Treasury-backed bonds, as has recently happened in both the United States and the United Kingdom. The first national bank appeared in England at the end of the seventeenth century, and indeed this fact marked an important step in the development of Western finance. In the late Middle Ages, as well as in the following centuries, there was no such 'lender of last resort', and that meant that liquidity crises automatically turned into bankruptcies for companies that had not kept enough cash reserves to survive difficult circumstances.

To see the papacy or monarchs, who were at the time the principal customers of the international banking companies, as potential 'lenders of last resort' or as institutions which could behave like the central banks of today in the event of a crisis is anachronistic for more than one reason. First of all, cultural and psychological attitudes were very different. The mentality of people who had been socialized according to aristocratic-chivalric values and what could be generically defined as a 'feudal' culture did not always permit them to understand the reasons that had led their bankers to suffer a liquidity shortage and thus to be unable any longer to offer the services hitherto provided: a mental/cultural barrier divided the monarchs from the businessmen. Despite the progress that trade and finance had achieved by the late thirteenth/early fourteenth century, this gap was not easily bridged. Merchant-bankers were still considered by rulers as servants – a special category

¹² *Lettere dei Ricciardi*, pp. xxviii-xxix, 48, 203.

of clerk, intellectually brilliant, powerful, useful and energetic, worthy of being rewarded with regular tax-income and also lands, mines, even titles – but still servants or, at best, a kind of vassal.

Furthermore, popes and kings, as well as territorial lords or high clerics, were rich, and therefore potentially desirable, customers, but also dangerous ones. They could not be relied on, since they were in constant need of ready cash and financial services themselves but were far less keen to help their bankers in turn once the latter had become unable to provide the flow of money and the services they needed. The reasons for this were strictly economic, and it is a point we will return to below. The main problem was that the papacy and certain European monarchs, such as the kings of England and France, were responsible for a rapid increase in lavish expenditure which was not matched by proportionate tax income. This does indeed present a parallel with contemporary financial problems: given that today's national governments create huge public debts and tend to ignore or underestimate the gap between expenditure and investment, it would hardly be reasonable to expect late-medieval rulers to have been aware of this imbalance and to have pursued an enlightened economic policy of sound and cautious investment.

Analysing late medieval financial 'crunches' from a 'bird's-eye' point of view allows us to identify further general parallels between medieval and modern times. As Nouriel Roubini and Stephen Mihm have clearly shown, financial crises are not 'black swans' – that is, rare, occasional and unpredictable events – but rather 'white swans': recurrent, endemic, cyclical events. Crisis and consequent bankruptcies can indeed be considered as phenomena intrinsic to the capitalistic system based on free trade and competition.¹³ And this proved to be the case even at the very dawn of international banking. Although it could be argued, as briefly discussed above, that Western Europe in the late Middle Ages displayed a 'capitalistic' economy of sorts, the system as it actually functioned at the end of the thirteenth century in the upper echelons of trade and finance might better be described as a kind of commercial 'proto-capitalism'.

The financial instability in England which arose in the turmoil of the 1290s affected the whole of the first half of the fourteenth century. The bankruptcy of the Ricciardi came at the same time as that of the powerful Sienese Buonsignori company, while a number of other banking organizations from Lucca and Pistoia faded away in the same period. After a few years of vacuum in which Edward I was forced to resort

¹³ N. Roubini and S. Mihm, *Crisis Economics: A Crash Course in the Future of Finance* (New York, 2010).

to moneylenders and pawnbrokers who applied much higher interest rates, the king found another affluent banking company keen to provide loans and financial services: that of the Florentine Frescobaldi. But their period as 'bankers to the Crown' ended in turn after just eleven years. By 1310, the Frescobaldi were already in a difficult situation. Probably in that same year Amerigo and Bettino Frescobaldi, understanding that the storm was approaching, left England for Florence. In February 1311, two other partners, Filippo and Giovanni Frescobaldi, together with three factors, left the island under a royal safe-conduct, using the excuse that they had to go to Florence as the king's proctors and seize some of the family's property so that they could then return to England and satisfy the Crown's financial demands.¹⁴ The Frescobaldi fell victim to the keen conflict between Edward II and the Lord Ordainers, and also to the plots woven against them by a fellow merchant-banker, the Genoese Antonio Pessagno, who actually took their place after their fall. But, above all, they fell victim to the rising royal expenditure required to fund Edward's Scottish campaigns and, still more, the war against France.

After the collapse of the Frescobaldi, their place was gradually taken by the Bardi, Peruzzi and Acciaiuoli, who by that time were already heavily engaged in southern Italy in the service of the Angevin king Robert the Wise. For almost two decades, these Florentine business companies would make large profits both in the Mediterranean and in north-western Europe. However, the period stretching from the Frescobaldi bankruptcy to the failure of the Florentine Triad was not one of uninterrupted financial buoyancy. Other important companies failed in the meantime, such as that of the Scali, one of the biggest at the time, comparable at least with the Acciaiuoli even if it could not match the financial power and organization of the Bardi and Peruzzi. The Scali fell into crisis in 1326, and the significance of their failure can be judged by the account of it given by Florence's chronicler, Giovanni Villani, who devoted an entire chapter to it, stressing that the company was more than 120 years old and its collapse was worse than the defeat suffered in the battle of Altopascio (1325) against the Ghibellines, since the Scali partners owed more than 400,000 florins to Florentine and foreign creditors.¹⁵ Their bankruptcy created a kind of financial earthquake

¹⁴ Kaeuper, 'The Frescobaldi', p. 75; A. Saponi, 'La compagnia dei Frescobaldi in Inghilterra', in *Studi di storia economica*, II, 859–926.

¹⁵ Giovanni Villani, *Nuova cronica*, ed. G. Porta, 3 vols. (Parma, 1990–1). On the collapse of the Scali, see E. B. Fryde, 'The Bankruptcy of the Scali of Florence in England, 1326–1328', in *Progress and Problems in Medieval England. Essays in Honour of Edward Miller*, ed. R. Britnell and J. Hatcher (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 107–20.

and many other 'good companies', as Villani states, were consequently regarded with suspicion by customers and suffered severe losses.¹⁶

The bankruptcy of the Bardi, Peruzzi and Acciaiuoli twenty years later was not a sudden event, but rather the conclusion of a crisis which had started years before. Already by the late 1320s the profits of the Peruzzi as well as of the Bardi were declining sharply, as Edwin Hunt shows in his study of the former.¹⁷ While their engagement in north-western Europe grew as a consequence of Edward III's politics and financial needs, trade and profits in the south diminished. Moreover, when war broke out between England and France in 1337, exactly as had been the case at the end of the thirteenth century, it caused many logistical problems for the wool trade with Flanders which had been of great economic importance for the Italian merchant-banking companies since the thirteenth century. Problems with the smooth functioning of this crucial export trade were an old issue. We might recall that in the 1270s, when the Ricciardi performed regular service as the king's bankers in England, there was an embargo against Flanders which lasted for several years (1272–9) and the Lucchese company was in charge of collecting fines from those companies that had broken the ban by exporting wool illegally.¹⁸ The situation was possibly already difficult over the late thirteenth to early fourteenth century during the Anglo-French wars for control of Gascony. Later, first with the Flemish revolt against France, then with the outbreak of the Hundred Years War, things could only become much worse. Both these events caused significant damage to the wool trade across the Channel. In addition, the start of military operations usually coincided with, or was preceded by, a general seizure of all the wool in the hands of merchants ready to ship it overseas. This was the case in 1294 and again in 1337: royal clerks were ordered to seize wool and other merchandise from any foreign and often also native merchants simply because the Wardrobe and the Exchequer were in a state of emergency. In 1337 and in the years following only the king's bankers, in particular the Bardi and Peruzzi, were spared royal seizure.¹⁹

More generally: S. Borsari, *Una compagnia di Calimala: Gli Scali, secoli XIII–XIV* (Macerata, 1994).

¹⁶ Villani, *Nuova cronica*, II, 525: 'Del fallimento della compagnia degli Scali di Firenze'.

¹⁷ Hunt, *Medieval Super-Companies*, pp. 156–211. See also A. Saporì, *La crisi delle compagnie mercantili dei Bardi e dei Peruzzi* (Florence, 1926), p. 107.

¹⁸ Kaeuper, *Bankers*, p. 44.

¹⁹ Hidetoshi Hoshino argued that the use of English wool in Florentine textile manufacture started to become relevant only during the third decade of the fourteenth century, thus indirectly confirming the idea that the big Florentine

The politico-military crisis in north-western Europe sucked the Florentine super-companies into the deadly spiral of lending without sufficient guarantees, and what had been until then a fairly lucrative business became a terrible 'bottleneck'. The war meant a sharp rise in public expenditure, partly because of logistics (that is, the costs of transporting and supplying an army), but even more due to the expense of employing professional armies. The latter were not a novelty introduced in the Hundred Years War, since mercenaries had already started to be employed in the second half of the thirteenth century, but certainly the war that broke out in 1337 saw the large-scale employment of professional soldiers, resulting in heavy expenditure for the Crown, not to mention the familiar episodes of sacking, pillaging and ravaging the enemy's countryside and urban centres.

Things were not going well, either, in Italy and the Mediterranean. Robert the Wise, king of Naples from 1309 to 1343, succeeded in developing a luxurious and refined court in Naples, a city which underwent a vast rebuilding under an ambitious programme of urban monument construction.²⁰ In a time-span of seventy years – from the reign of Charles I until that of Robert the Wise – the Angevin kings promoted the construction of twenty-three churches, some of which were extremely costly, notably the church and convent of Santa Chiara.²¹ At the same time, many new palaces for the lay nobility were built and the whole area around the royal castle of Castelnuovo was comprehensively redesigned. As a result, the finances of the Angevin kingdom, particularly during the reign of Robert the Wise, were put under severe stress. Furthermore, the Angevin kings had to face large expenses for their conflict against the Catalan-Aragonese after the Sicilian Vespers, and for their anti-Ghibelline wars in Italy, to say nothing of the annual census owed to the papacy in recognition of its feudal overlordship of southern Italy, which amounted to 40,000 florins.

All this was largely financed by the Florentine merchant-banking companies which could benefit from tax exemptions and special export licences, mainly for grain, but also for other commodities such as oil, wine, cheese and silk. Grain export towards central and northern Italian cities proved to be very lucrative, especially in emergency years when

merchant-banking companies had found a new exit market for a key commodity in their international trading network, partly in reaction to the increasing difficulties they were experiencing in exporting English wool to the Flemish textile centres. See H. Hoshino, *L'arte della lana in Firenze nel Basso Medioevo: Il commercio della lana e il mercato dei panni fiorentini nei secoli XIII-XV* (Florence, 1980).

²⁰ A. Feniello, *Dalle lacrime di Sybille. Storia degli uomini che inventarono la banca* (Bari, 2013), pp. 130–40.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 135–7.

famine was affecting the urban population, but even in normal years victualling was a constant need and the grain trade was highly profitable.²² The main problem for Florentine and other Italian merchants engaged in southern Italy was the increasingly aggressive role played by the Catalans. Starting from the Vespers revolt in 1282, Catalan merchants moved into Sicily and under Aragonese rule they enjoyed privileged conditions. It is true that Tuscan as well as other Italian merchants such as the Genoese, who had been trading for centuries in Sicily, managed to maintain their position even after the Catalan invasion, yet the situation they were facing was a difficult one, and not only in Sicily, Sardinia and Mallorca, but all across the Mediterranean. Moreover, continuous strife between the Angevins and the Catalan rulers caused occasional problems to those Italian merchant-bankers who were deeply involved in service to the Angevin court. Here again they encountered logistical problems from time to time, since they affected a 'bipartisan' attitude when operating in Sicily or other territories under the control of the Catalan-Aragonese, whilst being in fact the bankers to the kings of Naples. While on the one hand the Angevin court's lavish expenditure was not backed in the long term by sufficient guarantees and fiscal outsourcing, tensions between the Sicilian Crown and the Catalan presence on the other hand tended to reduce the high profits of trade up and down the Italian peninsula and through Mediterranean networks.

The combination of these factors meant that business in the south of Europe in the 1330s was not as flourishing as it used to be, and this possibly contributed to persuading the Bardi and Peruzzi to concentrate their investments in England, at the opposite corner of the continent.

²² Besides Puglia, Sicily also played an important role in this grain export trade since the island was one of the major producers in Europe. The best studies on the economic history of Sicily in the late Middle Ages are those by Bressi and Epstein. See H. Bressi, *Un monde méditerranéen: économie et société en Sicile, 1300–1450* (Rome, 1986); S. R. Epstein, *An Island for Itself. Economic Development and Social Change in Late Medieval Sicily* (Cambridge, 1992). They tend to present opposite views, the former focused on long and mid-distance commerce and Wallerstein's model of unequal trade (centre-periphery), the latter underlining on the contrary the island's rich internal productions and market. Notwithstanding Epstein's remarks and his criticism of Wallerstein's model, the importance of grain export in the Sicilian economy of the time cannot be underestimated. On that subject see also D. Abulafia, *The Two Italies. Economic Relations between the Norman Kingdom of Sicily and the Northern Communes* (Cambridge, 1977); idem, 'Southern Italy and the Florentine Economy, 1265–1370', *Economic History Review* 34 (1981), 377–88. For a preliminary analysis of the sources and problems concerning grain trade within the Catalan-Aragonese kingdom, with a focus on Sardinia, see M. Tangheroni, *Aspetti del commercio dei cereali nei Paesi della Corona d'Aragona. La Sardegna* (Pisa, 1981).

Yet I believe that the main reason why these two huge Florentine organizations moved the bulk of their business northwards was that they were not sufficiently capitalized to meet the rising demands of the English Crown while simultaneously maintaining the same level of investment in southern Italy – or at least, that they had liquidity problems due to having too much capital committed in a variety of locations. In other words, they had not earmarked enough cash reserves to meet emergency situations in the north whilst maintaining their level of commitment in another important market like southern Italy and its Mediterranean appendices. Again, like the Ricciardi forty years before, liquidity problems affected these early international companies when a sharp rise in financial demand occurred.

Although the problems in southern Italy certainly contributed to shaking the foundations of the Florentine giants, I still believe that the Anglo-French wars were the primary reason for their crisis, much as had happened in 1294 to the Ricciardi. Military expenses were much higher than any other. However heavy the burden of normal luxury expenditure for a royal court, it did not come close to matching military costs in war years. To give just one example: the total cost of the wars fought by Edward I in France (Gascony), Scotland and Wales at the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth century has been estimated at c. £750,000.²³ This was a huge sum for that time, if one considers that in twenty-three years of service the Ricciardi company had advanced to the Crown a total of c. £400,000 – a yearly average of £20,000.²⁴ The ‘New Custom’ duty on wool, hides and wool-fells established in 1275 gave a yearly income to the crown of c. £10,000, and the king’s ordinary annual income was about £40,000, when things worked smoothly.²⁵ Thus, if these numbers are correct, the military campaigns led by Edward I in the final years of his reign cost almost the equivalent of nineteen years of ordinary royal income. Eventually the king was forced to rely on heavy taxation of laymen and clerics, even drawing a large number of Wardrobe bills, many of which were never paid.²⁶

The costs of military operations in the Hundred Years War were even higher.²⁷ In addition to the employment of professional soldiers and

²³ M. Prestwich, *Edward I* (London, 1988), p. 400.

²⁴ Kaeuper, *Bankers*, p. 130.

²⁵ For a description of the ‘Ricciardi system’, see Kaeuper, *Bankers*, pp. 135–51.

²⁶ M. Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance under Edward I* (London, 1972), p. 221; Prestwich, *Edward I*, pp. 408–10; Moore, ‘Credit Finance’, p. 8.

²⁷ On the military aspects of the Hundred Years War, see E. Perroy, *The Hundred Years War*, with an introduction to the English edition by D. C. Douglas (London, 1965); J. Favier, *La Guerre de cent ans* (Paris, 1980); C. Allmand, *The Hundred Years War. England and France At War, c. 1300–c. 1450* (Cambridge, 1988); R. Neillands, *The*

logistics costs, Edward III had a vast network of continental allies, particularly Flemish and German, but in some cases even French ones, who were keen to help in the war provided they would be well remunerated. In 1339, Edward's Flemish and German allies were able to deploy 7,000 men on the ground while he relied upon just 4,600 men brought from England.²⁸ The cost of these alliances has been calculated by Fryde to be in the region of £200,000 out of a total war cost of £400,000 in this early stage of the conflict.²⁹

In the space of a few months in 1337, from February to October, the Bardi and Peruzzi were requested to provide £100,000. In comparison, money advanced for the court's ordinary needs – what might be defined as 'luxury expenditure' – was modest. The Bardi, for instance, together with William de la Pole, handed £41,500 to the court between 1329 and 1337, doubtless a considerable sum, but over a time-span of nine years.³⁰ The logistics costs of war in France should not be underestimated: interestingly, the analysis by Tony Moore of Richard FitzAlan, Earl of Arundel's naval campaign in 1387 shows how logistics costs were calculated for a naval campaign of a few months.³¹ The troops assembled and actually brought to France numbered 1,107 men-at-arms and 1,390 archers. Their wages came to £10,890 in total. The fleet was composed of fifty-one vessels (thirty-four ships with the remainder being large boats). The crew numbered 2,626 men, whose wages were £3,555, thus considerably less than the wages paid to the troops. However, the government had also to pay £1,167 in rent to the ship-owners, a further 1,000 marks for mooring before setting sail, and £1,000 for victualling. This amount of £5,722 plus 1,000 marks (£666) was therefore equivalent to more than fifty per cent of the wages paid to the troops. Out of a total expenditure of £18,754, in which a gift of 1,000 marks to the earl of Arundel must be included, logistics costs accounted for more than one third. It should be stressed moreover that this naval campaign did not envisage transport

Hundred Years War (London, 2001); A. Curry, *The Hundred Years War* (Basingstoke, 2003).

²⁸ C. Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp: English Strategy under Edward III, 1327–1360* (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 161.

²⁹ E. B. Fryde, 'Financial Resources of Edward III in the Netherlands, 1337–40', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 57 (1979), 1142–216.

³⁰ Saporì, *La crisi*, p. 49. On William de la Pole, see E. B. Fryde, *William de la Pole: Merchant and King's Banker* (London, 1988).

³¹ For what follows see T. K. Moore, 'Cost-Benefit Analysis of a Fourteenth-Century Naval Campaign: Margate/Cadzand 1387', in *Roles of the Sea in Medieval England*, ed. R. Gorski (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 106–12; A. R. Bell and T. K. Moore, 'Financing the Hundred Years War', in *The Hundred Years War Revisited: Problems in Focus*, ed. A. Curry (forthcoming).

of horses; otherwise costs would have been considerably higher. Thus, when we have at our disposal the wage costs for fighting men, but not the costs for logistics, we should add at least one third to the former in order to reckon the total.

In other words, it was one thing to fight in one's homeland or at its borders, but quite another matter to fight a war across the sea, even though the miles separating Southampton or other English ports from the French coast were relatively few. Supply costs grew considerably when defending a position far from home: maintaining a garrison on the border with Scotland was expensive, but maintaining one in Gascony even more so.³² The Staple of Calais gave a very good yearly output, but that was not enough to cover the expenses. It has been reckoned that maintaining the garrison at Calais in the early fifteenth century incurred a yearly cost of between £10,000 and £20,000.³³

Moreover, in comparing the cost of war with ordinary expenditure for the royal household, one further point in particular should be stressed. Military expenses differed not only in scale but also in the important respect that, while current luxury expenditure – for jewels, fine silks, pearls, exotic food and so on – could be interrupted or reduced in tight circumstances, this was not an option in the course of a war. Military operations could not be paused or stopped because money was lacking. For a ruler like Edward I or Philip the Fair, the idea of giving up military plans or interrupting a campaign because public resources were exhausted and under stress was simply inconceivable. The same held true for the idea that it was wiser to avoid war because the king's bankers were unable to provide the cash needed to fund military operations, or because these firms would risk bankruptcy if they kept on financing the war. Economic planning for the medium to long term, and even in the short term, that is for a few years, was something alien to the mentality and culture of medieval rulers. The king trusted his financial clerks and his bankers, he relied upon them for the smooth running of fiscal, monetary and financial matters; but he was unconcerned about concepts such as the national balance of payments or the economic health of the kingdom. Even expert international operators like the Italian merchant-bankers who served in England in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries lacked the skills for medium-term economic planning or for predicting the arrival of devastating financial storms. It would surely

³² A. Bell, A. Curry, A. King and D. Simpkin, *The Soldier in Later Medieval England* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 8–14.

³³ Bell and Moore, 'Financing the Hundred Years War'; D. Grummitt, 'The Financial Administration of Calais during the Reign of Henry IV, 1399–1413', *EHR* 113 (1998), 277–99.

be anachronistic to expect from medieval kings or noblemen the abilities that even shrewd businessmen like their bankers did not possess.

The only way for a war to prove economically successful for the king fighting it was to achieve the goal of conquering a land which would then guarantee stable, permanent and well-balanced governance. This happened for instance in the 1260s and in the following decade in southern Italy, when Charles I of Anjou was able to defeat Frederick II's heir to the Sicilian throne and become the first Angevin king of Sicily. Charles inherited the solid fiscal systems adopted by the Staufen, and before them by the Norman kings, and was able to improve them further with some innovations.³⁴ As a result, the Angevin kingdom, with Naples as its capital city, was one of the most affluent and economically flourishing regions of Europe at that time. At an earlier period, another economic success story was that of William the Conqueror and his Norman knights in 1066. Soon after their victory at Hastings, the Norman conquerors of England were able to establish an efficient fiscal system there. Yet against such instances of success, amongst which Edward I's annexation of Wales in the 1280s could also be numbered, stand many stories of substantial failure. Viewed in the long term, the Hundred Years War was one such economic failure. However many military victories the English armies could gain on the field, it eventually proved impossible for them to establish a solid hold on the regions where the battles were fought. Thus the war continuously drained the kingdom's resources without achieving any long-lasting positive result.

In wartime, the roles played by the king's bankers became of critical importance. Since there was inevitably a time gap between the payment to the king of any direct taxes on the laity and/or on the clergy (usually a tenth or a fifteenth of income), or the collection of an indirect tax like customs duties, and the actual flow of cash into the hands of the king's clerks, ready to be spent for royal needs, the function of the bankers was precisely to bridge this gap.³⁵ At the same time, these businessmen acting as 'bankers to the Crown' provided their networks and their expertise in order to transfer funds and pay money anywhere it was needed. Advances of cash and financial services, very useful in normal times, became crucial during a war. It is no coincidence that the Ricciardi

³⁴ Cf. W. A. Percy Jr., 'The Revenues of the Kingdom of Sicily under Charles I of Anjou, 1266–1285, and their Relationship to the Vespers' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Princeton, 1964).

³⁵ As observed by Bell and Moore, 'First, taxes were often voted *ex post* in response to a military emergency and also took time to collect in full. Second, any monies raised had to be transported from the point of collection to the battlefield': 'Financing the Hundred Years War'.

became Edward I's bankers during his journey to the Holy Land, when he went on crusade as a prince. Journeys and long periods abroad spent by the king together with a part of his retinue provoked large expenditure, as did royal weddings too, particularly that of the crown prince; but nothing placed public finances under greater strain than the outbreak of war. Paradoxically, it was precisely in the period when Edward I needed his bankers' assistance most that they were unable to help him, except for a short period after the Anglo-French war of 1294–1303 had started. In 1294, the Ricciardi were already in serious difficulty and could be of little help. The Bardi and Peruzzi did manage to survive for a few more years after the war had started, but they were in straitened circumstances from about 1338. Later in the fourteenth century, Edward III tried to keep his bankers afloat as they passed through the storm (see below), hoping they could continue to support him, but the task was an impossible one.

Conclusion

It could be debated at length whether for the Ricciardi, as for the Bardi, Peruzzi and Acciaiuoli, it was in the end the king's fault or their own that they declined as they did. For instance, in the case of the Ricciardi, one important issue is whether or not the bankers had actually taken possession of the proceeds from clerical taxation in England granted by Nicholas IV to Edward I in 1291. In 1290, the king had promised the pope that he would leave England and lead a new crusade, something that was to become a dramatic necessity when the last stronghold in the Holy Land, the city of Acre, fell in the following year. Unfortunately for the Ricciardi, the tithe money they were charged to collect and deliver to Edward I was in the hands of other merchant-banking companies. Each company had to return a certain sum: the Ricciardi themselves were assigned 35,500 marks, other firms like the Buonsignori 16,720, and the Mozzi over 10,000.³⁶ Yet all the money had to be collected by the Ricciardi. Did they succeed in coming into possession of all these sums? We lack evidence on this point, but we might well suspect them to have encountered problems in receiving the money because each firm would try to resist and delay payment. The firms were under pressure in France, where the pope asked to withdraw 200,000 *livres tournois* which Philip the Fair owed the papacy, as well as in Italy, where Nicholas IV wanted to give financial support to Charles II of Anjou.³⁷ If the Ricciardi actually

³⁶ G. Arias, *Studi e documenti di storia del diritto* (Florence, 1901), pp. 58–9.

³⁷ Del Punta, *Mercanti e banchieri*, pp. 194–5.

got hold of the 100,000 marks the pope had assigned to Edward I, the latter's fury was justified when, in 1294, he asked for cash to finance his war against Philip the Fair and did not receive it; whereas if the Ricciardi were never able to collect the money, or could only collect a small part of it, their responsibility was less. In any case, Edward's decision to accelerate the company's downfall proved eventually to be a mistake, for the king was unable to recover many of its assets: principally debts owed to them by noblemen, high clerics and other companies.

The fall of the Frescobaldi is a different case, because initially they fell victim more to a fierce internal conflict between Edward II and his barons than to an external war fought outside the country. The king was a weak character and his bankers were forced to leave the realm to avoid the hostility of his enemies. In the case of the Bardi, Peruzzi and Acciaiuoli forty-five years later, the king (Edward III) was heavily indebted to these three Florentine firms, particularly the Bardi and Peruzzi. His strategy was very different from that of his grandfather. Edward III tried to help his bankers withstand the storm, granting them privileges and preserving them from wool seizure, but, as we have observed, the companies could hold out only for a few years after the start of the war against France. As has been recently observed concerning Edward III's financial default, however, 'while it is true that he did owe [the Bardi and Peruzzi] huge sums of money, the true picture is more nuanced'.³⁸ Giovanni Villani's statement that by 1346 the king was indebted to the two companies for 900,000 and 600,000 florins respectively was clearly an exaggeration:³⁹ here, as elsewhere in his chronicle, Villani, though he had been for years an expert factor in the service of such big international companies, behaved more as a medieval chronicler than as a businessman fully aware of the importance of precise accounting. Moreover, included in these sums owed by the king to his bankers was an interest rate calculated on years of extensive overdraft. In total, this was a significant amount of money;⁴⁰ but can we blame these businessmen for applying an interest rate to their loans?

In truth, it would be hard to imagine that any businessman today, in the same position as the late medieval merchant-bankers, would ever work, accept risk and offer his expertise, his networks and services to

³⁸ Bell and Moore, 'Financing the Hundred Years War'. Cf. A. Bell, C. Brooks and T. K. Moore, 'Le Crédit au Moyen Âge: Les Prêts à la couronne d'Angleterre entre 1272 et 1345', in *Ressources publiques et construction étatique en Europe, XIII^e-XVIII^e siècle*, ed. K. Béguin (Mayenne, 2015). pp. 117-30 (pp. 123-5).

³⁹ Villani, *Nuova cronica*, III, 424: 'Del fallimento della grande e possente compagnia de' Bardi'.

⁴⁰ Moore, 'Credit Finance', p. 8; Bell, Brooks and Moore, 'Interest in Medieval Accounts'.

a customer without benefiting both in trade privileges and in interest applied to loans. In addition, it should be noted that the interest rate applied by the big Italian companies was low in comparison with the standard of that time. They usually asked 15%, well below the average rate, since moneylenders might apply 40%, 50% or even more. Thus the relationship between the international companies and their most important customers, namely the rulers and the papacy, was a mutually profitable one. It worked very well in times of comparatively normal expenditure, but it was too weak to survive for long in times of emergency and extraordinary financial pressure. It is difficult to answer the question, 'Who was to blame for the companies' bankruptcy, the kings or the bankers themselves?' It can be argued that blame attaches to both, but to what respective extent is difficult to calculate. The kings were at fault because they tended to undertake military expeditions for which they lacked the necessary financial coverage, acting under the illusion that their faithful bankers would always be able to assist them in any financial emergency. For their part, the bankers were equally responsible for their failure, because they did not maintain sufficient capital reserves and were unable to foresee that simultaneous situations of financial stress would cause a liquidity crisis, quickly pushing them into the abyss of bankruptcy.

In any case, while the question of who can be held responsible for the successive failures of banks in Europe from the late thirteenth century onwards has its own importance, it is not perhaps the most interesting point. Taking a 'bird's-eye' view of the period, there are more significant factors which caused the banking companies to collapse, including the internal structural weaknesses that rendered these early large firms unable to withstand international political troubles and prolonged emergency situations. Here again I will refer to the study by Roubini and Mihm on recent financial crunches.⁴¹ First of all, however: can we indeed draw a comparison between what has happened in recent years in the world's globalized economy and the late-medieval bankruptcies?

The answer would appear to remain, 'yes and no'. As mentioned previously, a direct comparison is impossible, because structural differences between the two financial and historical realities are too many and too profound to permit it. However, regarding one point we can venture to assert a similarity. Roubini and Mihm have shown that contemporary financial crunches arise from speculative bubbles, which grow on the basis of one specific business sector. For instance, the 2007 global financial crisis occurred after years of reckless speculation in the real estate

⁴¹ Roubini and Mihm, *Crisis Economics*.

sector.⁴² Easy lending and lavish capital supply help to create these huge speculative bubbles. The end of the story was the notorious sub-prime mortgage crisis which started in the United States and quickly spread to many other countries. We have observed that speculative bubbles grow within one specific sector; alternatively, however, they can grow out of one specific commodity. Looking back over the history of the twentieth century, a striking example is that of oil. Oil has enabled a small number of countries to become among the most affluent in the world, even though their economies before the systematic exploitation of oil wells were underdeveloped. Whether, and for how many decades, they will be able to maintain such a level of wealth after the recent drop in oil prices is a question beyond the scope of this paper. But what we can ask ourselves at this stage is whether there was a commodity comparable to oil in late-medieval Europe; and indeed, at two corners of Europe were two commodities that could be considered the 'oil of the late Middle Ages'. In England, there was wool. In southern Italy, as we have seen, there was grain. Each produced a type of speculative activity in the second half of the thirteenth century when growth in demand for these two commodities made them especially valuable. This demand was in turn the consequence of prolonged demographic growth and of a general economic expansion which had started centuries before. In England, the birth-date of the speculative cycle based on wool can be identified as 1275, when the 'New Custom' duty on wool, wool-fells and hides was established. To fix a date for the beginning of speculation on grain export from southern Italy is more difficult; however, it can be affirmed that systematic exploitation of the *tratte* on grain export, that is, the concession of special export licences in addition to normal customs duty, began in the reign of Charles I of Anjou and was fully developed by the time of Robert the Wise in the early fourteenth century. The so-called *ius exiturae* or *tratta* soon became one of the most, if not the most, significant of the many fiscal sources of income in the Angevin kingdom.⁴³ In the 1320s, from Puglia alone, 40,000–45,000 tons of grain were leaving every year to go to central/northern Italy or elsewhere in the Mediterranean.⁴⁴ This huge trade flow gave Robert the Wise the opportunity to pursue a power politics with the support of the richest Florentine banking companies.

The same can be said about customs duties collected in England on wool exports. Without wool, could the 'Ricciardi system' have started? The answer would seem to be in the negative. As in the case of grain in

⁴² Ibid., ch. 1.

⁴³ Feniello, *Dalle lacrime*, p. 143.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 142.

the Angevin kingdom, duties on wool in England were only a part of the fiscal system and royal revenue, but they represented a key form of income inasmuch as wool was a major commodity in the country's export trade. Without wool, late medieval England would have been a much poorer country than it was, and its rulers, in particular Edward I and Edward III, would not have had the chance to pursue the expansionist politics they did. Without grain, Charles I and his successors might not have been able to resist their Catalan-Aragonese rivals, and certainly Robert the Wise would have been unable to lay the foundations of twenty-three new churches and rebuild Naples as a magnificent new capital city. The darker side of the picture is that, having in their hands such valuable commodities as wool and grain, English monarchs and their Angevin equivalents thought they could continue for decades without financial problems, relying on the services and cash advances of their bankers. In the case of Edward I, for instance, it is likely that his successful campaigns in Wales and the massive castle-building programme undertaken to secure hold of the newly-conquered land encouraged the king's enterprise and ambition and persuaded him that with his bankers' financial support he could achieve anything.

In other words, both in England and in southern Italy the growth of fiscal income and the facilities provided by efficient international banking companies fostered speculative spirals. But those merchant-banking companies that seemed so efficient and almost invincible were in fact giants with feet of clay, or 'two columns' that eventually crashed, as Villani remarked.⁴⁵ When politico-military turmoil erupted simultaneously in different parts of Europe, provoking a liquidity crisis, their internal weaknesses were exposed. They rapidly collapsed, and with them the kind of speculative bubbles they had helped to create.

⁴⁵ Villani, *Nuova cronica*, III, 183.

‘Nostri Fratelli da Londra’: The Lucchese Community in Late Medieval England

Bart Lambert

During the late medieval period, Italian merchants visited England to import luxury items, export wool and cloth and engage in banking operations.¹ Whereas most of these traders spent only short periods in the country, some stayed for longer and formed proper communities.² Despite their economic importance, the internal organization of these merchant groups in England has remained largely under-studied. Much more is known about the workings of the Italian communities in late medieval Bruges, the commercial powerhouse on the other side of the Channel, in the county of Flanders. In 1949, for example, the American economic historian Raymond De Roover published a comprehensive article on the merchants of Lucca in the city. De Roover drew on the *Libro della comunità dei mercanti Lucchesi*, the daily register of the Lucchese community in Bruges, and reconstructed its composition, its organization and the activities of its members.³

Evidence for England is much more fragmented and far less detailed,

¹ See J. L. Bolton, ‘Alien Merchants in England in the Reign of Henry VI, 1422–61’ (unpublished B.Litt. dissertation, University of Oxford, 1971), pp. 135–141; H. L. Bradley, ‘Italian Merchants in London c. 1350–c. 1450’ (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1992), pp. 99–288; E. B. Fryde, ‘Italian Merchants in Medieval England, c. 1270–c. 1500’, in *Aspetti della vita economica medievale: Atti del Convegno di Studi nel X anniversario della morte di Federico Melis* (Florence, 1985), pp. 215–31.

² S. Dempsey, ‘The Italian Community in London during the Reign of Edward II’, *The London Journal* 18 (1993), 14–22; F. Guidi Bruscoli and J. Lutkin, ‘Perception, Identity and Culture: The Italian Communities in Fifteenth-Century London and Southampton Revisited’, in *Resident Aliens in Later Medieval England*, ed. W. M. Ormrod, N. McDonald and C. Taylor, *Studies in European Urban History* 42 (Turnhout, 2017), pp. 89–104.

³ R. De Roover, ‘La communauté des marchands Lucquois à Bruges de 1377 à 1404’, *Annales de la Société d’Emulation de Bruges* 86 (1949), 23–89. For the *libro della comunità*, see *Il libro della comunità dei mercanti Lucchesi in Bruges*, ed. E. Lazzareschi (Milan, 1947).

and does not, in itself, allow a similar study.⁴ What is usually overlooked, however, is that the *Libro della comunità* often deals with the activities of 'our brothers of London', as the Luccese in Bruges called their compatriots across the Channel,⁵ as well. References to the work and lives of Luccese merchants in the British Isles can also be found in the collections of the *Archivio di stato* in Lucca. When pieced together with the scattered English records, these sources give us a surprisingly clear view of the business of one of the most important foreign trading groups in late medieval England. In addition, the activities of merchants and bankers from Lucca can be linked to the often much better documented achievements of *Lucchesi* outside the commercial sphere. This chapter includes a case study of the Gigli family, who entered England as businessmen but left their most enduring mark as dignitaries of the Church.

Lucchese trade and banking in England

Just like their Florentine fellow traders, Luccese merchants were eager buyers of high-quality English wool and, increasingly over the course of the late medieval period, English cloth. The main purpose of their visits to the British Isles, however, was the sale of silks. From the eleventh century, Lucca had held a reputation as one of Europe's main centres for the production of satins, velvets, brocades and other silk-related products. Raw silk imported from Asia or, since the thirteenth century, grown in the Luccese *contado* was processed in the city and sold in markets all over the continent.⁶ Lacking a considerable fleet of their own, merchants from Lucca hired cargo space in Genoese ships, which sailed to Southampton, in Venetian galleys, which called at London from the 1390s onwards, or occasionally in Catalan vessels, in order to get their textiles to England. Alternatively, silks were shipped to the flourishing international market of Bruges and subsequently transported across the Channel using shuttle services operated by northern European

⁴ For the Tudor period, see M. E. Bratchel, 'Regulation and Group-Consciousness in the Later History of London's Italian Merchant Colonies', *Journal of European Economic History* 3 (1980), 585–610.

⁵ *Libro della comunità*, ed. Lazzareschi, p. 46.

⁶ B. Dini, 'L'industria serica in Italia. Sec. XIII–XV', in *La seta in Europa sec. XIII–XX: Atti della ventiquattresima settimana di studi, 4–9 maggio, 1992*, ed. S. Cavaciocchi (Florence, 1993), pp. 91–123 (pp. 92–7); P. Mainoni, 'La seta in Italia fra XII e XIII secolo: migrazioni artigiane e tipologie seriche', in *La seta in Italia dal Medioevo al Seicento: dal baco al drappo*, ed. L. Molà, R. C. Mueller and C. Zanier (Venice, 2000), pp. 365–99.

shipmasters.⁷ Some *Lucchesi* imported precious cloth into England without being physically present in the country. During the 1430s, for example, Goffredo Rapondi remained firmly established in Bruges and had the Milanese Borromei Bank sell his silks on commission in London.⁸

A substantial share of the Lucchese silk in England was supplied to the Royal Wardrobe, members of the royal household and the high clergy. Simone Boccella, part of a family with interests in Bruges, Paris and London, sold luxury textiles to King Edward III, his mother Isabella of France, her partner Roger Mortimer and the royal children Edward and Isabella during the fourteenth century.⁹ At the end of the 1430s, the partnership of the *Lucchesi* Giovanni Micheli and Alessandro Palastrello and the Milanese Felice da Fagnano counted the duke of York, the earls of Dorset, Huntingdon, Somerset and Suffolk, the countess of Stafford and most of the royal household among their clientele.¹⁰

Whereas merchants from Lucca could provide both raw silk and finished products to the ducal court and other customers without any restrictions in the Low Countries, the retail trade in smaller silk items in England was largely controlled by the Mercery. Apart from the period when the franchise of London was in abeyance, between 1351 and 1378, Lucchese traders had to sell part of their stock to the mercers of London, who then sold these goods on to their customers.¹¹ Micheli, Palastrello and da Fagnano worked closely together with William Cantelowe, Thomas Chalton and Richard Rich, who also offered them lodging and acted as their guarantors.¹² In most cases, however, the relationship between the Mercery and the *Lucchesi* was a tenuous one. Both Simone Boccella and his relative Francesco were attacked by people associated with the mercers.¹³ In 1368, the silk-women of London, who were attached to the Mercery, petitioned the mayor and the aldermen claiming that the Lucchese Nicolao Sarducci had bought up all silk stocks in the city and forced prices up, drawing on inside information from Bruges.¹⁴ In 1456, even Palastrello could not escape the mercers' anger.¹⁵

⁷ Bradley, 'Italian Merchants', pp. 68, 72, 106.

⁸ B. Lambert, *The City, the Duke and their Banker: The Rapondi Family and the Formation of the Burgundian State (1384–1430)*, Studies in European Urban History 7 (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 161–2.

⁹ Bradley, 'Italian Merchants', pp. 219, 273.

¹⁰ Bolton, 'Alien Merchants', p. 121.

¹¹ A. F. Sutton, *The Mercery of London: Trade, Goods and People, 1130–1578* (Aldershot, 2005), p. 114.

¹² Bradley, 'Italian Merchants', p. 263.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 342.

¹⁴ Sutton, *Mercery of London*, p. 116.

¹⁵ Bradley, 'Italian Merchants', p. 298.

Despite their century-old tradition, the *Lucchesi* lost much of their interests in the silk trade in England between 1350 and 1450. In the fourteenth century, warfare and internal disorder had made many silk producers leave Lucca and set up shops in other places in Italy, most notably Venice, Genoa and Bologna.¹⁶ While the *Lucchesi* had been responsible for most of the silk supplies to the English court under Edward III, they had experienced more competition during the reign of Richard II. By the start of the reign of Henry VI, they had been all but obliterated by other Italians, mostly Venetians and Genoese.¹⁷ In 1438–9, only three to four per cent of alien imports through the ports of London and Southampton were made by Lucchese traders. Thirty-five per cent of these imports consisted of precious cloth, most of which was provided by the partnership of Micheli, Palastrello and da Fagnano.¹⁸

Alongside their commodity trade, Lucchese merchants in England specialized in sophisticated banking operations. Already at the end of the thirteenth and the start of the fourteenth centuries, the Ricciardi (or Riccardi) company acted as the bankers of choice to King Edward I.¹⁹ Despite their bankruptcy and that of many other Italians entangled in government credit, merchants from Lucca continued to provide financial services to the Crown. Banking interests often went hand in hand with an involvement in the silk trade. Simone Boccella not only sold luxury textiles to the king and the royal household, but also lent them money. In 1368, he made more than 120,000 Florentine florins available to Lionel of Antwerp, the son of Edward III, when the prince travelled through Flanders on his way to his wedding in Italy.²⁰ During the last quarter of the fourteenth century, Lucchese financiers in England would also become increasingly involved in the transfer of papal funds. In 1376, a conflict between the pope and the city of Florence made it impossible for the papacy to further rely on its habitual Florentine bankers. Instead, it turned to merchants from Lucca, who until the end of the century would channel enormous amounts of money from England to the papal treasury.²¹

¹⁶ L. Molà, 'L'industria della seta a Lucca nel tardo Medioevo: emigrazione della manodopera e creazione di una rete produttiva a Bologna e Venezia', in *La seta in Europa*, ed. Cavaciocchi, pp. 435–45.

¹⁷ Bradley, 'Italian Merchants', p. 2.

¹⁸ Bolton, 'Alien Merchants', p. 134. See also chapter 4 in this volume, by Ignazio Del Punta, regarding the Ricciardi company.

¹⁹ R. W. Kaeuper, *Bankers to the Crown: The Riccardi of Lucca and Edward I* (Princeton, 1973).

²⁰ Bradley, 'Italian Merchants', pp. 199–200.

²¹ J. Favier, *Les Finances pontificales à l'époque du Grand Schisme d'Occident, 1378–1409* (Paris, 1964), pp. 480–524; Y. Renouard, 'Compagnies mercantiles lucquoises au

The Lucchese community in London

The Lucchese presence in England was strongly concentrated in London. The beating heart of their activities was Lombard Street, near the church of St Mary Woolnoth. This was the place where business deals were struck and contracts were enforced by English or Italian notaries.²² Lucchese merchants such as Nicolao Domaschi,²³ Luigi dal Portico²⁴ and Angelo di Cristoforo²⁵ owned houses in Lombard Street. Others lodged with Englishmen. In 1439, the Hosting Law even made it obligatory for foreign traders, including merchants from Lucca, to stay with English hosts while in the country. Mercer Richard Rich hosted Giovanni Micheli, Alessandro Palastrello and Felice da Fagnano in his house in Broad Street.²⁶ The hosting system soon proved unworkable, however, and was abandoned in 1444.

From at least 1379, the *Lucchesi* in London were organized in a formal merchant guild or *comunità*.²⁷ This association was presided over by a consul and several councillors. In 1420, for example, Paolo Meliani was in charge of the guild.²⁸ We do not know how the consul and councillors in London were selected. In Bruges, they were elected annually by all members of the *comunità* except during periods of insecurity, when they were appointed directly by the city government in Lucca.²⁹ The consul of the community in London was entitled to judge all disputes, commercial or otherwise, between fellow *Lucchesi*. When conflicts involved people of different origins, the matter had to be brought before the London city courts. In 1416, for example, the courts heard the case between Paolo Meliani and the mercer John Eton.³⁰ The consul was also

service des papes d'Avignon', in *Études d'histoire médiévale*, ed. Y. Renouard (Paris, 1968), pp. 825–31.

²² English notaries included William Skade and Robert Cressy, ASL, S.M. Corteorloandini, 13-07-1484, 12-08-1499. Italian notaries included Giovanni di Sanctis di Bologna. ASL, S. Croce, 17-03-1395, 26-07-1395.

²³ Bradley, 'Italian Merchants', p. 13.

²⁴ *Libro della comunità*, ed. Lazzareschi, p. 103

²⁵ ASL, Arnolfini, 19-01-1391.

²⁶ *The Views of the Hosts of Alien Merchants, 1440–1444*, ed. H. L. Bradley, Publications of the London Record Society 46 (London, 2012), pp. 57–82.

²⁷ *Libro della comunità*, ed. Lazzareschi, p. 45.

²⁸ Bradley, 'Italian Merchants', p. 301.

²⁹ E. Lazzareschi, 'Gli statuti dei Lucchesi a Bruges e ad Anversa', in *Ad Alessandro Luzio, gli Archivi di stato italiani: Miscellanea di studi storici*, 2 vols. (Florence, 1933), II, 75–88.

³⁰ Bradley, 'Italian Merchants', p. 303.

expected to confirm the authority of notaries,³¹ to act as an attorney for members of the community and to settle inheritances when one of the Lucchese merchants in England died, often involving bequests to their home town.³²

The consul was entitled to exclude members from the *comunità* when they refused to accept his decisions. In 1378, Piero Graziani, who had earned his spurs as a silk supplier to the Crown during the reign of Edward III, ignored the ban on trading activities with the mercers that had been agreed by the community. He was promptly thrown out of the guild, whose members were instructed to cut all ties with him. The outcast complained to the London mayor and alleged that his fellow *Lucchesi* in the city wanted to have him murdered. After he had several members of the community arrested, negotiations were started in Lombard Street and an amicable settlement was reached, allowing Graziani back into the guild.³³ Certainly by 1379, the *comunità* had its own *loggia* or nation house, where meetings were held.³⁴ It also had access to a chapel dedicated to the *Volto santo*, or 'Holy Face', a much venerated crucifix in Lucca, in the church of St Thomas of Acon.³⁵ In his will of 1449, Niccolò Micheli requested to be buried there.³⁶ In 1534, Stefano del fu Maestro Mateo Tasso also chose the chapel as his final resting place, and wanted all his goods sold upon his death in order to pay for a proper tomb.³⁷

It is not entirely clear whether the *Lucchesi* in the rest of England fell under the authority and the jurisdiction of the consul in London, but their number was rather limited anyway. Lucchese merchants such as Raffaello Vanelli³⁸ and Paolo Meliani³⁹ often had their goods shipped to Southampton. Palastrello and Micheli traded through both Southampton and Sandwich.⁴⁰ As both places only served as outports to London and had no considerable local market, activities there required no permanent physical presence and could be managed

³¹ ASL, Archivio dei Notari, 18-03-1449.

³² Bradley, 'Italian Merchants', pp. 292, 300.

³³ *Libro della comunità*, ed. Lazzareschi, pp. 45-51, 58-60.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

³⁵ Bradley, 'Italian Merchants', p. 21.

³⁶ D. B. Foss, 'The Canterbury Archiepiscopates of John Stafford (1443-52) and John Kemp (1452-4) with Editions of their Registers', 2 vols. (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1986), II, 636-8.

³⁷ ASL, Miscellanee, 21-11-1534.

³⁸ A. A. Ruddock, *Italian Merchants and Shipping in Southampton: 1270-1600* (London, 1951), p. 59.

³⁹ Bradley, 'Italian Merchants', p. 270.

⁴⁰ Bolton, 'Alien Merchants', pp. 294, 298.

from the capital. An exception was Gherardo Galganetti: he resided in Southampton and acted as an agent for his family firm in London. Whenever shipments of wine arrived in the port, Galganetti inspected the cargoes, sold part of them on the spot to English merchants and forwarded whatever was left to his relatives. At the end of the reign of Henry IV, his sons would even become members of Southampton's local craft guilds.⁴¹

Relations with other Lucchese communities in Europe

It would be wrong to consider the Lucchese community in London an isolated one focused solely on commercial relations between England and the motherland. The geographical mobility of Lucchese merchants across Europe was remarkably high and facilitated constant international exchanges. Paolo Meliani, still acting as a consul in London in 1420, made a name in the silk trade in the Burgundian Low Countries after 1430.⁴² In April 1464, Francesco Rapondi was registered as a broker in London.⁴³ In the second half of the year, he acquired citizenship in Bruges.⁴⁴ Francesco Guinigi, resident in London in the 1450s, had a son born in the English capital, a daughter 'created in Bruges, born in Lucca', and he died in Rome. Francesco's company was one of the many that had branches in several countries. The Guinigi were the largest of the late-medieval Lucchese firms, with over twenty employees, split evenly between Bruges and London. Upon the outbreak of the Great Western Schism in 1378, the split within the Catholic Church between Pope Urban VI in Rome and Clement VII, the anti-pope, in Avignon, many Lucchese bankers sided with the latter. The Guinigi family stayed faithful to Urban VI, making them the candidates of choice to transfer papal funds from England, whose clergy equally remained in the Roman camp.⁴⁵ As a result, the number of Guinigi staff in London increased even further in the following years.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Ruddock, *Italian Merchants in Southampton*, pp. 102–3.

⁴² B. Lambert, "'Se fist riche par draps de soye': The Intertwinement of Italian Financial Interests and Luxury Trade at the Burgundian Court (1384–1481)", in *Europe's Rich Fabric: The Consumption, Commercialisation and Production of Luxury Textiles in Italy, the Low Countries and Neighbouring Territories (Fourteenth–Sixteenth Centuries)*, ed. B. Lambert and K. A. Wilson (Farnham, 2016), pp. 91–106 (pp. 97–8).

⁴³ TNA, E179/144/69.

⁴⁴ Lambert, *The City, the Duke and their Banker*, p. 163.

⁴⁵ Favier, *Finances pontificales*, pp. 505–13.

⁴⁶ C. Meek, *Lucca 1369–1400: Politics and Society in an Early Renaissance City-State* (Oxford, 1973), p. 197; *Libro della comunità*, ed. Lazzareschi, *passim*.

The Lucchese consulates in London and Bruges worked closely together as well. They remained in touch through constant letters and endorsed each other's decisions, including the exclusion of Piero Graziani in 1378. The community in England seems to have occupied a rather subordinate position in relation to its counterpart in Flanders. We do not have any precise indications of the number of members in London, but it was almost certainly lower than that in Bruges. The consul in England addressed his colleagues across the Channel as his 'fratelli maggiori', his elder brothers,⁴⁷ and the head of the Bruges merchant guild had the power to order an inquiry into the ledgers of the London-based Lucchese firms without any additional approval.⁴⁸

The close working relationship between the communities in London and Bruges, as well as the home government in Lucca, also made it more difficult for members to default on their obligations. During the 1380s, Francesco Vinciguerra had been doing business with John Ford, bishop of Durham. After incurring several debts, the Lucchese secretly left England with his wife and children in 1387, taking with him the jewels Ford had given him in pawn. The bishop persuaded King Richard II to write a letter to the city government in Lucca, asking them to confiscate all Vinciguerra's possessions in Italy.⁴⁹ Nese Brunelli, a fellow Lucchese who happened to be in Vinciguerra's house in London, was arrested. Nese then contacted his brother Luizo in Bruges, who informed the consul of his merchant community. When, some months later, Francesco Vinciguerra appeared in Flanders, he was summoned to the nation house in Bruges and told to settle his affairs with the bishop of Durham. Vinciguerra claimed he had never had any bad intentions and was prepared to account for his actions in England, on condition that he was given a safe-conduct for half a year by the king. The consul in Bruges agreed, informed the magistrate in Lucca and the merchant guild in London, and asked the English authorities to do whatever was necessary.⁵⁰

The legal framework of the Lucchese presence in England

The *comunità* in London was responsible for only part of the regulation of the Lucchese presence in England. Merchants from Lucca working and living in the country had to follow rules issued by the national and city

⁴⁷ *Libro della comunità*, ed. Lazzareschi, p. 45.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 110–11.

⁴⁹ ASL, Tarpea, 01-03-1387.

⁵⁰ *Libro della comunità*, ed. Lazzareschi, pp. 140–5.

governments as well. Compared to the situation in the Low Countries, the legal framework of international trade in England was very restrictive. In 1422, Jacopo di Poggio and Davino Galganetti were accused of working as brokers or money dealers without having first obtained a licence from London's Court of Aldermen.⁵¹ In 1457, Francesco Guinigi was reprimanded for breaking the parliamentary statute that required foreign merchants to deposit bullion whenever they exported staple goods, such as wool, from the country.⁵² In 1439, an act of parliament was passed that made it mandatory for all alien traders to register their presence with the English authorities and to stay with English hosts, who had to oversee their guests' transactions and report them to the Exchequer. The 'views of hosts' delivered under this act detail all the commodities the foreign merchants bought and sold while in England, as well as the prices paid.⁵³ Only seven of these views, produced between 1440 and 1444, when the system was abandoned, relate to the activities of Lucchese merchants. All seven specify the transactions of the partnership of Micheli, Palastrello and da Fagnano, who were recorded as selling cartloads of satin, velvet and damask, and buying English cloth in return.⁵⁴

The same parliament that passed the Hosting Law in 1439 also introduced a poll tax on all foreign-born residents living in the country over the age of twelve. This so-called 'alien subsidy' would be collected from 1440 until 1487 and was payable at different rates.⁵⁵ Originally classified, like the rest of the taxpayers, as either householders or non-householders, the *Lucchesi* fell within the much more expensive category of merchant strangers from 1449 onwards, and saw their rates increased again in 1453.⁵⁶ In 1483, four years before the final collection, they were exempted from payment of the tax. Many returns of the alien subsidies have been preserved, providing us with a unique source regarding the presence of aliens in late medieval England.⁵⁷ Between 1440 and

⁵¹ Bradley, 'Italian Merchants', p. 325.

⁵² Bolton, 'Alien Merchants', p. 220.

⁵³ *Views of the Hosts*, ed. Bradley, pp. ix–lvi; A. A. Ruddock, 'Alien Hosting in Southampton in the XV Century', *Economic History Review* 16 (1946), 30–7.

⁵⁴ *Views of the Hosts*, ed. Bradley, pp. 57–82.

⁵⁵ S. L. Thrupp, 'A Survey of the Alien Population of England in 1440', *Speculum* 32 (1957), 262–73.

⁵⁶ *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, ed. C. Given-Wilson, P. Brand, S. Phillips, M. Ormrod, G. Martin, A. Curry and R. Horrox, 16 vols. (Woodbridge, 2005), XII, 48.235.

⁵⁷ The alien subsidy returns are accessible online in the 'England's Immigrants Database' (EIDB), <http://www.englishimmigrants.com> [accessed 20 August 2017].

1483, fifty-seven payments of the tax were made by forty-two different Lucchese individuals.⁵⁸ All of them lived in London. Forty-one were identified as merchants, most of them members of established Lucchese families such as the Burlamacchi, the Guidiccioni or the Compagni. One man, John Grene, worked as a cook.⁵⁹ Even though alien wives of foreign residents were supposed to be assessed, no Lucchese women were recorded in the alien subsidy returns. This suggests that merchants from Lucca either remained single or married local women during their stay in England.⁶⁰ Most *Lucchesi* paid the tax once or twice, but some spent longer periods in the British Isles. Bartolomeo Schiatta, a moneylender to the Crown, is recorded in every collection between 1456 and 1467.⁶¹ Occasionally Italians from other cities, such as the Florentines Francesco Pazzi and Marco Strozzi, were mistaken for *Lucchesi*,⁶² highlighting the highly subjective nature of alien identities during this period.

However, the English authorities also provided protection and privileges to alien residents, at least to those who could afford them. Foreigners could purchase the freedom of English cities or towns, which empowered them to carry out a trade or craft as a member of a guild or livery. Several *Lucchesi* became freemen of the city of London, including Simone Boccella and Luigi dal Portico, supplier to the Royal Wardrobe.⁶³ During the fourteenth century, aliens were able to obtain letters of protection from the Royal Chancery, which safeguarded them against arbitrary arrests or confiscations of their property for a given period of time.⁶⁴ Documents of this kind were granted to Azzolino Simonetti, whose family had been among the shareholders of the Ricciardi Company in the thirteenth century, and Perceval dal Portico.⁶⁵

At the end of the 1380s, the Chancery introduced a new grant. Aliens who swore an oath of allegiance to the Crown and paid the necessary

⁵⁸ Advanced search with 'Lucca' as Nationality/Place of Origin and 'tax assessment' as Document Type, EIDB.

⁵⁹ TNA, E 179/235/58, m. 1, EIDB.

⁶⁰ Suzanne Dempsey has suggested that during the reign of Edward II, most Italian residents in England must have married English women: Dempsey, 'The Italian Community', p. 17.

⁶¹ TNA, E 179/235/58, m. 1; E 179/144/72; E 179/236/74; E 179/144/68; E 179/144/69; E 179/236/96, m. 2; E 179/236/107, m. 2, EIDB.

⁶² TNA, E 179/236/107, m. 2; E 179/144/68; E 179/144/69, EIDB. One man was assessed as Lucchese but his name, Christophe Vanderell, suggests he hailed from the Low Countries. TNA, E 179/144/64, m. 11, EIDB.

⁶³ Bradley, 'Italian Merchants', pp. 306–7.

⁶⁴ B. Lambert and W. M. Ormrod, 'A Matter of Trust: The Royal Regulation of England's French Residents during Wartime, 1294–1360', *Historical Research* 89.244 (2016), 208–26.

⁶⁵ CPR 1340–3 (London, 1900), p. 398.

fee were given a set of privileges that were usually reserved for native Englishmen. These could include the right to acquire and bequeath immovable property, to sue in the king's courts, and to pay taxes at the lower, denizen rates.⁶⁶ One of the first recipients of these letters of denization, in 1391, was Bartholomew Bosan, a Lucchese silk merchant who had married into a London mercer family and had worked for Henry Bolingbroke.⁶⁷ Connections to the court often smoothed the process of obtaining these documents. Angelo di Cristoforo, resident of Lombard Street, was granted letters of denization in 1400 after having supplied precious cloth to the Crown for years.⁶⁸ In 1422, when he returned to Lucca, Cristoforo even received personal letters of recommendation from King Henry V. Eight other *Lucchesi* would take out denization before the end of the fifteenth century.⁶⁹

More than merchants: the Gigli family

Four of the eight letters of denization granted to *Lucchesi* during the fifteenth century were secured by the Gigli, a family that was strongly rooted in the world of trade but made a name for itself in England pursuing very different activities. Following in the footsteps of his father Piero, Carlo Gigli was involved in international trade in Bruges from at least the early 1420s.⁷⁰ He held an account with the Milanese Borromei bank in the city⁷¹ and, together with Goffredo Rapondi, he sold luxury textiles to the Teutonic Order.⁷² His main customer was the court of the Burgundian duke Philip the Good, to whom, between 1430 and 1443, he supplied over two thousand ells of silk cloth, brocades and satin.

⁶⁶ B. Lambert and W. M. Ormrod, 'Friendly Foreigners: International Warfare, Resident Aliens and the Early History of Denization in England, c. 1250–c. 1400', *EHR* 130.542 (2015), 1–24.

⁶⁷ H. L. Bradley, 'Bosan, Bartholomew (d. 1400), Merchant', in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition (Oxford, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed 7 August 2017]. For Bosan's denization, see *CPR 1391–6* (London, 1905), p. 9.

⁶⁸ *CPR 1399–1401* (London, 1903), p. 374.

⁶⁹ Advanced search with 'Lucca' as Nationality/Place of Origin, 'letters of denization' as Document Type, '1400' as Start Date and '1499' as End Date, EIDB.

⁷⁰ Carlo Gigli appeared in a case before the Bruges Bench of Aldermen in 1424: SAB, Civiele Sententiën, 1423–1424, fol. 218r.

⁷¹ Borromei Bank Research Project, ESRC R000239125, *The Ledger of Filippo Borromei & Company of Bruges, 1438*, trans. and cal. J. L. Bolton and F. Guidi Bruscoli, <http://www.queenmaryhistoricalresearch.org/roundhouse> [accessed 20 August 2017].

⁷² Lambert, *The City, the Duke and their Banker*, p. 157.

All the precious fabrics which brightened up the festivities for Philip's wedding to Isabel of Portugal in 1430 had been ordered from Gigli and Paolo Meliani, earning them the impressive sum of over £30,000.⁷³ Carlo had also obtained membership of the prestigious Confraternity of the Dry Tree, where wealthy merchants rubbed shoulders with Burgundian officers, urban notables, and the high clergy.⁷⁴ His luck did not last though: some time after 1445, the silk merchant fell out with his ducal patron.

The dispute may have been the reason why Carlo Gigli decided to ply his trade in England. After obtaining a safe-conduct from the English Crown in 1451,⁷⁵ he traded with English gentry and with draper Thomas Lyffyn.⁷⁶ Determined to reside in the realm more permanently, the Lucchese took out letters of denization for himself, his wife Camilla Cagnoli and his family in 1460, entitling him to acquire lands and other possessions, to plead in English courts and to pay taxes like other lieges.⁷⁷ Carlo could rely on the experiences of relatives who had moved to London before him. His elder brother Filippo had lodged with a local fishmonger, Robert Stratford, in the parish of Bartholomew the Less before 1435,⁷⁸ and his youngest brother Nicolao, a supplier of silk and gold cloth to the Royal Wardrobe,⁷⁹ had paid 6s. 8d. to the alien subsidy collector in Tower, Billingsgate, Bridge or Candlewick Street ward in 1451.⁸⁰

It was only after Carlo Gigli had moved to the English capital that his literary interests come to notice. In 1458, he taught poetry and French and sold books to William Worcester, chronicler, antiquary and the secretary of commander and landowner John Fastolf.⁸¹ In the early 1460s, he wrote several letters in Latin commenting on the military and political events of the Wars of the Roses to Lucchese merchant colleagues and to Pope Pius II, which suggests he must have had a formal education

⁷³ Lambert, "Se fist riche par draps de soye", pp. 97–8.

⁷⁴ SAB, Ledenregister Gilde Drogenboom, fol. 3v.

⁷⁵ C. H. Clough, 'Three Gigli of Lucca in England during the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries: Diversification in a Family of Mercery Merchants', *The Ricardian: Journal of the Richard III Society* 13 (2003), 121–47 (pp. 127–8). In November of the same year, Carlo Gigli's goods were confiscated in Bruges: SAB, Civiele Sententiën, 1447–1453, fol. 253v.

⁷⁶ CCR 1447–54 (London, 1941), pp. 347–8; CCR 1454–61 (London, 1939), p. 63.

⁷⁷ CPR 1452–61 (London, 1910), p. 579.

⁷⁸ Bradley, 'Italian Merchants', p. 44.

⁷⁹ CPR 1446–52 (London, 1909), p. 375.

⁸⁰ TNA, E 179/144/64, m. 11, EIDB.

⁸¹ J. Hughes, 'Stephen Scrope and the Circle of Sir John Fastolf: Moral and Intellectual Outlooks', in *Medieval Knighthood IV: Papers from the Fifth Strawberry Hill Conference 1990*, ed. C. Harper-Bill and R. Harvey (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 109–46 (p. 132).

and a basic knowledge of classical authors.⁸² It must have been his commercial ambitions that drew him back to Bruges, nevertheless, where he died and was buried next to his father.⁸³

Bruges was also the place where, in 1434, during the family's first period of residence in Flanders, Carlo's son Giovanni had seen the light. The child of a merchant with scholarly affinities, he was sent to study in Bologna in 1449 and spent time at the University of Oxford in the early 1450s before becoming a doctor of both laws (civil and canon) in Ferrara and at the *Studio lucchese*. Drawing on Carlo's Italian connections, he started a career in the Church and was appointed papal collector and *nuncio* in England in 1476.⁸⁴ Following his return to England, the realm where he must have spent part of his youth, Giovanni obtained letters of denization in December 1477 which, alongside the usual clauses, also stipulated that the recipient was now entitled to hold English benefices.⁸⁵ He was assessed in the alien subsidy roll for 1483, paying the householder's tariff, as were the eight members of staff who lived with him in London's Coleman Street ward.⁸⁶

During his stay in London, Giovanni Gigli pursued the humanistic interests his father had fostered before him. The Bruges-born Lucchese acted as a tutor to King Edward IV's children, helped to distribute William Caxton's indulgences, and has been credited as the writer of the first epithalamium – a poem composed for the bride on her way to the marital chamber – in England.⁸⁷ Already archdeacon of London at the time of the 1483 collection, Giovanni rapidly climbed the ecclesiastical ladder. From 1490 onwards, he served as the English ambassador at the Roman Curia. He was consecrated bishop of Worcester in September 1497, but could only enjoy his episcopate briefly: he died in Rome less than a year later, aged sixty-four, without having visited his see.⁸⁸

⁸² R. Bianchi, 'Il mercante Carlo Gigli, Pio II e le Guerre delle Rose', in *Intorno a Pio II: un mercante e tre poeti*, ed. R. Bianchi (Messina, 1988), pp. 69–122.

⁸³ Clough, 'Three Gigli of Lucca', p. 128.

⁸⁴ J. B. Trapp, 'Gigli, Giovanni (1434–1498), Papal Official, Diplomat and Bishop of Worcester', in *ODNB*, online edition [accessed 7 August 2017]. Clough, 'Three Gigli of Lucca', pp. 128–30.

⁸⁵ TNA, C 66/541, m. 7. For the certification that he had done homage to the king, see TNA, PSO 1/64/54.

⁸⁶ TNA, E 179/242/25, m. 14, EIDB. See also *The Alien Communities of London in the Fifteenth Century: The Subsidy Rolls of 1440 and 1484*, ed. J. L. Bolton (Stamford, 1998), pp. 85–6.

⁸⁷ G. Tournoy and G. Thoen, 'Giovanni Gigli and the Renaissance of the Classical Epithalamium in England', in *Myrica: Essays on Neo-Latin Literature in Memory of Jozef IJsewijn*, ed. D. Sacré and G. Tournoy (Leuven, 2000), pp. 133–93.

⁸⁸ Trapp, 'Gigli, Giovanni'; Clough, 'Three Gigli of Lucca', pp. 130–40.

The household assessed in London's Coleman Street ward in 1483 included not only cooks, butlers and servants, but also two sons of Giovanni's uncle Nicolao. Sebastiano was categorized as a merchant residing in England for longer than three months,⁸⁹ commercial activities probably being the reason why he purchased letters of denization in 1485.⁹⁰ Together with Giorgio Morebello, another Lucchese, Sebastiano took two London haberdashers to court when they refused to pay for a bond made in Dublin in 1491.⁹¹ Dame Elizabeth Stockton, a widow heavily invested in the overseas textile trade, entrusted Sebastiano with twenty-one coarse woollen cloths to be finished and sold in Italy. The deal went sour when Francesco Guidiccioni, the consignee in Venice, embezzled the goods and Stockton brought an action against Gigli before the sheriffs of London to make him pay for the loss. Pretending he was only 'a marchaunt straunger of litell acqueyntaunce' in the capital, the Lucchese asked the chancellor to have the case brought before the king's courts.⁹²

Sebastiano also provided financial services to his relative Giovanni. Another case before the Chancery Court highlights how interwoven the family's interests in the Church and their commercial activities still were and, again, how closely the Lucchese communities in London and Bruges worked together. At an unspecified date between 1483 and 1485, King Richard III sent priest Robert Welby on a mission to Flanders. The king asked Giovanni Gigli, then archdeacon of London, to make sure that Welby would be able to pay for his expenses abroad. At Giovanni's request, Sebastiano drew a bill of exchange worth £20 on his connection Real Reali, a Lucchese merchant in Bruges. Reali delivered the money to Welby in Flanders but in the years that followed the priest failed to pay back the debt. On 15 May 1492, the Court of Chancery decided that Robert Welby had been negligent and should reimburse the Gigli as soon as possible.⁹³ Though not directly involved in the case, in 1491 Sebastiano took out letters of denization again, making him the only known recipient in the fifteenth century to have been granted these papers twice.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ TNA, E 179/242/25, m. 14, EIDB.

⁹⁰ CPR 1476–85, p. 529.

⁹¹ TNA, C 1/203/5–9.

⁹² TNA, C 1/137/33; M. K. McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society, 1300–1620* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 225–6.

⁹³ *Calendars of the Proceedings in Chancery, in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth; To Which Are Prefixed Examples of Earlier Proceedings in that Court, Namely, from the Reign of Richard the Second to that of Queen Elizabeth, Inclusive*, 3 vols. (London, 1827–32), I, 120–2.

⁹⁴ CPR 1485–94 (London, 1914), p. 368.

In 1494 he settled in Lucca, where he held office⁹⁵ and died young five years later.⁹⁶

Silvestro Gigli, listed as a servant on the alien subsidy roll, was born in Lucca in 1463 and pursued a career which was very similar to that of his 1483 host. A graduate in law, he accompanied Giovanni to Italy, where he collected benefices and revenues. In 1498 he succeeded his cousin as bishop of Worcester, confirming the reputation for nepotism that his family had by now acquired. In London, Italian merchants and an Englishman had even made a bet on the chances of another 'of the kynrede of the Gigliis' being appointed to the see.⁹⁷ Also administering his diocese by proxy, Silvestro was the papal legate who brought to England the dispensation for Prince Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon in 1505. As Thomas Wolsey's agent in Rome he fought out bitter rivalries with Cardinal Christopher Bainbridge, and, according to some, also had him poisoned. He helped Erasmus procure papal dispensations, earning him a dedication in the humanist's work. Silvestro died in 1521 and was buried in the English Hospice in Rome,⁹⁸ yet not without having piloted his own nephew Felice da Mazzarossa into the rectorate of Tredington in the diocese of Worcester. Mazzarossa was the last of the Gigli family to be granted letters of denization.⁹⁹

The Gigli story makes it clear that it was not only Lucchese commercial knowhow which was appreciated in late medieval England. A particular field of expertise for which people from Lucca were renowned was that of medicine. Between 1328 and 1357, John Adam, freeman of the city of London, served as an apothecary in royal service.¹⁰⁰ Both John of Gaunt and King Henry IV relied on the work of physician Louis Recouche, who, in 1405, was granted letters of denization.¹⁰¹ Some years

⁹⁵ Sebastiano was *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia* in Lucca when the statutes of the Lucchese community in Bruges were renewed in 1498: *Libro della comunità*, ed. Lazzareschi, p. 271.

⁹⁶ Clough, 'Three Gigli of Lucca', p. 141.

⁹⁷ TNA, C 1/202/13-16. Italians Cypriano de Furnariis, Rafaello Maruffo, Mariotto de Bardi, Gerolamo Buonvisi, Bartolomeo del Ruffo, Andrea Cavalcanti and Gerolamo Gentili lost, but claimed that Englishman George Ardysonne already knew Silvestro Gigli was about to be appointed when he made the bet.

⁹⁸ C. H. Clough, 'Gigli, Silvestro (1463-1521), Diplomat and Bishop of Worcester', in *ODNB*, online edition [accessed 7 August 2017].

⁹⁹ *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, Vol. II*, ed. J. S. Brewer (London, 1864), 1.213.

¹⁰⁰ L. C. Matthews, *The Royal Apothecaries* (London, 1967), pp. 27-8, 176.

¹⁰¹ C. H. Talbot and E. A. Hammond, *The Medical Practitioners in Medieval England: A Biographical Register* (London, 1965), pp. 204-5. Talbot and Hammond wrongly describe Recouche as French. For his letters of denization, see *CPR 1405-8* (London, 1907), p. 22.

later, the same Henry IV wrote a letter to Paolo Guinigi, ruler of Lucca between 1400 and 1430, asking him to send his celebrated doctor Davino Nigarelli to England. The physician was able to impress the English king, was given letters of denization in 1412, and was requested to stay longer because of his skills.¹⁰²

Conclusion

During most of the late medieval period, merchants from Lucca were resident in England. An integrated study of a variety of English and other sources confirms that they were organized in a formal community presided over by a consul, held meetings in a nation house and had access to a private chapel. Even though their presence was strongly concentrated in London and their number was low compared to other Lucchese communities in Europe and other Italian groups in England, their impact upon English society was significant. Despite the restrictive business climate and the competition of local traders they controlled the silk trade in the country and played an important role in the money-lending business until well into the fifteenth century. Members of the community became freemen of the city of London and bought letters of denization, obtaining rights that were usually reserved for English-born residents. Others left a legacy outside the realm of commerce. The Gigli family branched out from trade and rose to the highest ranks in the English Church, though their commercial interests were never far away.

¹⁰² Talbot and Hammond, *Medical Practitioners*, pp. 33–4. For his letters of denization, see *CPR 1408–13* (London, 1909), p. 392.

‘Saluti da Londra’:
Italian Merchants in the City of London in the
Late Fourteenth and Early Fifteenth Centuries

Helen Bradley

Contact between cultures is sometimes perceived in terms of shared literary, dramatic, musical and visual forms, and thought of largely as a question of the geographical spread of styles and ideas over time. However, there is another, entirely different, dimension to contact between cultures, one which is much more commonplace. It arises from trade, and considering this other dimension necessitates expanding our view to accommodate a wider community and, to match it, a wider sense of what we imagine ‘culture’ to be.

Trade compels people with little or no shared language, and perhaps few shared practices, somehow to forge a deal which is sufficiently attractive and advantageous to satisfy all parties involved. In the later Middle Ages, commerce was based upon personal introductions and repeat business among reliable friends. Partnership and mutual profit were core values. Trade entailed a high degree of trust between parties in many important respects, but firstly in the provision of quality merchandise (usually on the basis of viewing a small sample) and secondly where credit was given (often over a period of years). Both Chaucer (working among London merchants as a controller of wool and petty custom) and Boccaccio (working for the Bardi in Naples) were heavily immersed in the world of international commerce in their early years.¹ It was a literate, numerate and intensely skilled practical world, and its entire purpose was to cross national boundaries. Ordinary traders going about their business built a linguistic, economic and social interface between cultures which provided a foundation for the transmission of what might be labelled ‘higher culture’. The fifteenth-century London mercer William Estfield described gold thread as *ore filado* while the Southampton merchant John Bentham referred to silk as *ceta*, both men using Italian terms as everyday words, without hesitation, in the full

¹ W. R. Childs, ‘Anglo-Italian Contacts in the Fourteenth Century’, in *Chaucer and the Italian Trecento*, ed. P. Boitani (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 65–87 (pp. 67–8, 74).

confidence that they would be widely recognized and understood.² The English or Italian businessmen of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries might not consciously have aspired to cultural sophistication themselves (although Chaucer and Boccaccio certainly did), but the numerous points at which their communities intersected were nevertheless vitally important to cultural contact between England and Italy. One of the Venetian galleys which arrived in England just before Christmas 1437, for instance, carried a bale of paper for 'Titolivio', described by the London customs collectors as a clerk of the duke of Gloucester – his Ferrara-born poet Tito Livio Frulovisi.³

Later medieval London, although cosmopolitan enough and thriving by contemporary standards, was a very different place from the sprawling multicultural capital city of the twenty-first century. The population, estimated at c. 40,000 in 1400, mostly lived in the City of London, within the walls on the north bank of the river Thames. Westminster was self-governing, as was Southwark on the south bank. The City was controlled politically by a mayor, sheriffs and aldermen, and divided administratively into wards, each consisting of a number of parishes. Its trade was regulated by livery companies, each presided over by its master and wardens, producing regulations for the craft, enforcing standards of quality and admitting new members to practise the trade.⁴

The records of London's civic administration, its ecclesiastical courts and its livery companies, taken together with those of central government, provide a variety of English evidence for the activities of Italian merchants in London. Records of probate and taxation demonstrate where and with whom they lived, and who their friends and neighbours were. Customs rolls, supplemented by lists of individual business transactions compiled as a result of 'hosting' legislation, are instrumental in helping to reconstruct their trade and business contacts. There is also a great deal of finely detailed Italian evidence for the lives and practices of their merchants in London. The ledgers of the Borromei bank for the late 1430s provide the names of both English and Italian account-holders, as well as the names of parties to other financial transactions handled by the bank. In addition, the Fondo Datini preserves a substantial archive of letters written to Francesco di Marco Datini (Iris Origo's 'merchant of Prato'), some of which are from his Florentine correspondents living in London at the end

² TNA, E 101/128/30 rot. 6, E 101/128/31 rot. 28. For online transcripts, see *Views of Hosts: Reporting the Alien Commodity Trade, 1440–45*, ESRC RES-000-22-0628, <http://www.sas-space.sas.ac.uk> [accessed 7 August 2017].

³ TNA, E 122/77/3 m. 16.

⁴ See C. M. Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People 1200–1500* (Oxford, 2004).

of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth centuries. These were usually signed off with greetings from London: 'Salute [*sic*] d(a) Londra'.⁵

Italian residence in London: Spiritual homes and temporal households

We can trace the nucleus of the Italian community in London from the information given by Italian testators. They left instructions about where they chose to be buried, the parish churches where they had worshipped (and had forgotten to pay their tithes and oblations) and sometimes mentioned their own houses or the houses in which they were lodging. Italians made wills in the full expectation that their relatives and friends would obtain probate in London, and the courts were disposed to be helpful to them. One such grant of probate for a Lucchese in 1449 mentions that the will was translated 'a lingua lumbardina in latinu(m)', from the Italian language into Latin, presumably for the better understanding of the court and so that a proper record of its proceedings could be made. We can see very clearly how this might have worked when, almost a century later, the Spaniard Diego Sanchez enlisted a Portuguese in London to help with his last testament '[. . .] because my wyf ys old and a straunger and cannot under stand the speche of the cuntrye [. . .] the whiche John Deeze at my request dyd write this my said will with his owne properhand in the Spanyshe tonge [. . .]'. The notary who witnessed the will confirmed that he 'copied yt out of Spanyshe into Engleshe indifferently worde for worde thurgh the helpe and interpretation of the forsaid John Deeze'.⁶ In whatever language Italian testators made their wills, they invariably chose family members or colleagues to perform the office of executor, and they usually included their English friends and neighbours as witnesses. One Venetian testator, for example, called upon the vintner Thomas Roche, the goldsmith William Couper, the skinner Robert Mor and the saddler John Burley as local witnesses, and the London grocer John Crosby witnessed the will of a Florentine in Southampton, where both men had business.⁷

The London ecclesiastical courts feature some sixty Italian testators for the period covering the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Fifty-two

⁵ The Datini archive, 'Fondo Datini', is online, <http://datini.archiviodistato.prato.it> [accessed 7 August 2017]. See also I. Origo, *The Merchant of Prato: Daily Life in a Medieval Italian City* (London, 2017).

⁶ LMA, DL/C/B/004/MS09171/004 fol. 254 (1449); *London Consistory Court Wills 1492-1547*, ed. I. Darlington, London Record Society 3 (1967), 110, 4 April 1537.

⁷ LMA, DL/C/B/004/MS09171/003 fol. 63 (1420); TNA, PCC 17 Godyn (1467).

of them specified a place of burial in London, mostly choosing sites in the north-east quadrant of the City. Some preferred the parish church where they worshipped regularly, and these churches clustered toward the more central parishes of St Mary Woolchurch, St Mary Woolnoth, St Nicholas Acon, St Bartholomew the Less, St Benet Fink, St Peter Cornhill and All Hallows Gracechurch.⁸ However, the majority of those who indicated a preference, more than thirty testators, opted for Austin Friars to the north-east of the City.⁹ This was a fashionable house favoured by the English aristocracy, including Lucia Visconti, the Milanese countess of Kent who had married Edmund Holland and who lived at the Minories during her widowhood. Italian merchants certainly knew Austin Friars very well too. They worshipped there with the fraternities of St James and St Sebastian, and they were familiar with the layout of the building in terms of its statues, chapels and windows. They also named the individuals who provided pastoral support, including four priests – Brother Antonio, Master Domenico da San Gimignano, Brother Giovanni Antonio of Milan and Brother Giovanni of Novara – who would have heard confessions in their native language. A Dutch testator, employed by a Venetian company in London and attended on his deathbed by a Venetian physician, referred to a fifth priest, his confessor Brother Ludovico. He also mentioned the fraternity of St James and would have worshipped with his Italian employers at Austin Friars, but possibly his spiritual father heard confession in Dutch.

At Austin Friars, the Italians gathered together in an upstairs room known as ‘lumbardeshall’, and this may have provided the location for their city-state meetings.¹⁰ Of course, those who preferred burial at Austin Friars also had parish connections during their lifetimes. The London grocer Jacopo da Ferrara, for instance, was a parishioner of St Peter the Poor, while the Genoese Jeronimo Centuriono was a

⁸ H. L. Bradley, ‘Italian Merchants in London c. 1350–c. 1450’ (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1992), pp. 13–22. See map, ‘The Parishes of London c. 1520’ (east half), in *The City of London from Prehistoric Times to c. 1520*, Historic Towns Atlas III, ed. M. D. Lobel, © The Historic Towns Trust (Oxford, 1989). This and other maps are available online, <http://www.historictownatlas.org.uk> [accessed 7 August 2017].

⁹ ‘The Parishes of London c. 1520’ (east half), in *The City of London*, ed. Lobel.

¹⁰ For the fraternities, LMA, DL/C/B/004/MS09171/008 fols. 46 (1492), 50v (1493); for Brother Antonio, DL/C/B/004/MS09171/002 fol. 28v (1408), DL/C/B/004/MS09171/004 fol. 276v (1449), DL/C/B/004/MS09171/005 fol. 3 (1450); for Master Domenico, DL/C/B/004/MS09171/006 fol. 84 (1471); for Brother Giovanni Antonio, DL/C/B/004/MS09171/008 fol. 51; for Brother Giovanni, DL/C/B/004/MS09171/009 fol. 96v (1518), DL/C/B/001/MS09168/006 fol. 13v (1518); for Brother Ludovico, DL/C/B/004/MS09171/007 fol. 2 (1484); for Lombards’ Hall, DL/C/B/004/MS09171/005 fol. 101v.

parishioner of St Swithun's Candlewick Street.¹¹ Certainly Italians ran their own independent households, where they accommodated resident colleagues and employees and occasionally put up visitors. In 1442–3, for instance, the Venetians Federico Corner and Carlo Contarini provided lodgings for a Venetian galley-master and stored seven bales of ginger on his behalf.¹² Among the agents who worked for Datini, Piero Marchi – who had a rental income from three houses in Florence – was living in a house in the parish of St Nicholas Acon when he made his will in 1395. The Florentine merchant Jacopo Guidoni Baldi was lodging in London with Datini's correspondent Alamano Mannini when he made his will in 1399, at the Mannini brothers' house in St Bartholomew the Less, where their company was based.¹³

From the 1440s, the Italians were eligible to pay a tax called the alien subsidy, and the collectors of this tax recorded the name of each householder in the ward, with any co-resident colleagues, lodgers and employees. The tax records confirm that Italian-occupied houses were scattered among their English neighbours in the north-east quadrant of the City. Most were in Broad Street and Langbourn wards, with some in Bishopsgate and Walbrook wards too.¹⁴ Italian houses were sited to provide easy access to the cloth market at Blackwell Hall and to the beam where spices and heavy goods were weighed. They also operated as convenient customer collection points. In the 1350s, for example, Elizabeth de Burgh, lady of Clare, had her purchases (including currants and liquorice) collected from Bartolomeo Thomasini's house in London. Goods such as these were then taken from London on horseback to Clare. Similarly John Redy, the porter of the king's wardrobe, picked up two bales of the valuable red dye called grain direct from Giovanni Marcanova's house during 1420–2.¹⁵

Italian integration into London civic society

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Italy consisted of a number of independent city-states. Consequently, although the Italians in London

¹¹ LMA, DL/C/B/004/MS09171/006 fol. 143 (1474), DL/C/B/004/MS09171/004 fol. 29v (1439).

¹² *The Views of the Hosts of Alien Merchants, 1440–1444*, ed. H. L. Bradley, London Record Society 46 (2012), section 47.

¹³ LMA, DL/C/B/004/MS09171/001 fols. 352 (1395), 422 (1399).

¹⁴ Bradley, 'Italian Merchants in London', pp. 27–34; see map, 'The Wards of London c. 1520', in *The City of London*, ed. Lobel, online www.historictownsatlas.org.uk.

¹⁵ TNA, E 101/93/10 m. 5v, E 101/93/8 m. 6; E 101/407/5 m. 4.

might choose to act as a cohesive group, for instance in petitioning the English parliament, that group comprised several distinct Italian city-state communities. It seems likely that these city-state communities may have had an informal function, providing a convivial setting for social and cultural events. However, they certainly also met formally, to discuss business and to take commercial and financial decisions which affected the whole community. Datini's agents in London recorded that 'siamo stati i(n)sieme tutti i fiorentini e abbiamo d(e)liberato'.¹⁶ Similarly, Venetian merchants met formally to decide business matters, and those who refused to take part could be fined and ejected from their community.¹⁷

All those born outside the king's territories were aliens. Any alien domiciled in London could opt to become a denizen (that is, a naturalized Englishman) by obtaining a grant from the Crown. Such a grant might be for his own lifetime or in perpetuity (if he wanted to protect the rights of his children). Those who were Welsh-born and Calais-born favoured denization as a precautionary measure to safeguard their position, and some Italians did so too. The Venetian draper Giovanni Mannucci (Lorenzo Marcanova's associate) took this route, and in the provinces so too did the Venetian mariner Gabriele Corbizzi, who became town steward of Southampton (1441–2), water bailiff (1443) and sheriff (1453).¹⁸ Denization, however, was a double-edged sword. It required a change of national allegiance, and the transformation of the alien into an Englishman could create a considerable backlash within his newly-abandoned native state. Before his denization, a Piedmontese known in London as Richard Garner (supplier of wines and master of the mint to Henry IV) suffered losses totalling £2,000-worth of goods in transit on shipping captured by the English. After his denization in 1409, he sent £4,000-worth of merchandise to Italy but received neither return cargo nor compensation from his Italian colleagues. Having lost his Piedmontese status, as an Englishman he was unable to sue for recovery and he alleged that his Italian creditors – who could have been satisfied from the proceeds of his goods in Italy – had agreed among themselves to ratchet up the pressure by suing him in England. Garner

¹⁶ 'we were together, all the Florentines, and we agreed', Fondo Datini 407472, 28 February 1392.

¹⁷ *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating to English Affairs, existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in other Libraries of Northern Italy*, 40 vols., ed. R. Brown, H. F. Brown, G. Cavendish Bentinck and A. B. Hinds (London 1864–1947), I, 71, 15 February 1449.

¹⁸ *CLB, Letterbook K (CLBK)* 306, 26 November 1443; *CPR* 1441–6, 238, 26 November 1443; *Rot. Parl.* IV, 386 (1430–1).

was obliged to turn to his royal patron, obtaining protection from his creditors for seven years.¹⁹

Taking up local citizenship represented a different option for the resident alien. Simply becoming a citizen did not require a change of allegiance (at least, not until well into the fifteenth century in London) and therefore did not invite any retributive consequences. It was a popular middle route, by which an Italian merchant might remain Florentine, Venetian or Genoese and also enjoy all the advantages of being a Londoner. He retained any privileges to which his native community was entitled, along with access to its information channels and participation in its decision-making, and combined this with the further benefits offered to him as an active, respected member of the local urban community. Some Italians maintained multiple citizenships in northern Europe, basking in the variety of privileges accorded by all their regular places of business. Expatriate Italians had adopted this strategy in Ireland, where Florentine, Lucchese and Sienese merchants were settled in a number of southern Irish ports including Dublin, Waterford, Cork and Limerick. On 28 March 1286, Giovanni Donati took the citizenship of Cork, an honour which he shared with his father Taddeo. Giovanni had been born in Ireland and kept a household and family in Cork, where he contributed to the expenses of the town. Another member of the Donati family combined his employment by the Frescobaldi with his office as sheriff of Cork from 1298 to 1302, and went on to become sheriff of Limerick in 1307. Some fifty years on, a later Giovanni Donati enjoyed London citizenship; originally from Siena, he had lived in London since he was a young man, becoming a member of the Grocers' Company and domiciling his family in the City, although he still retained links with Ireland, appointing two attorneys to act for him there in 1375. Possibly this is the same man as John Lumbard, who obtained a licence to export a consignment of wool to Florence after failing to find a buyer in England or Cork. This John Lumbard was a citizen of Cork who, as keeper of the castle of Gynes, was entitled to the support of the free tenants of the cantreds of McHill and Olethan in wartime.²⁰

Altogether, during the period 1350 to 1450, some forty Italians took up London citizenship and six Italian testators identified themselves

¹⁹ CPR 1408–13, p. 55, 4 March 1409; pp. 212–3, 16 July 1410.

²⁰ *Historical and Topographical Notes, etc. on Buttevant, Castletownroche, Doneraile, Mallow, and Places in their Vicinity*, ed. J. Grove White, 4 vols. (Cork, 1906–15), IV, 48–50. The Cork authorities disputed Donati's citizenship; see A. Beardwood, *Alien Merchants in England 1350–1377: Their Legal and Economic Position*, Monographs of the Medieval Academy of America 3 (Cambridge MA, 1931), p. 68 n. 1; CPR 1358–61, p. 48, 4 May 1358; CPR 1374–7, p. 97, 17 May 1375; CPR 1354–8, pp. 405–6, 28 May 1356; CPR 1354–8, p. 370, 4 May 1356.

primarily as members of London craft companies. Among them Jacopo da Ferrara, a citizen and member of the Grocers' Company, left a bequest to the company on condition that their members should attend his funeral.²¹ London citizenship conferred the right to open a shop and sell retail, as well as freedom from tolls throughout England. This latter benefit was particularly attractive for alien merchants, offering as it did considerable savings on haulage between their principal areas of business in London, the Cotswolds and Southampton. However, it was not always easy for Italians to convince provincial toll-collectors that they were citizens of London, as the grocer Niccolò Donati discovered in 1369 when his goods were in transit at Exeter. The family was well known in London (where, some twenty years before, Niccolò and his brother Giovanni had both worked for one of the founder members of the Grocers' Company) and in Cork, but rather less so in rural south-west England. The Piedmontese Richard Garner fared no better in 1406, complaining that two of his employees had been held for ransom in Calais and his attorney imprisoned at Dartmouth.²²

Nevertheless, alien citizens such as these held a pivotal role in consolidating ties between the Italian and English communities in London. They cemented their social and economic foothold in London by contracting marriages to Englishwomen, often high-status widows like Elizabeth Stokton. Elizabeth's late husband, the mercer Sir John Stokton, had been in the same line of business as her new Florentine bridegroom, the Medici agent Gherardo Canigiani. Conversely, widows of Italians were eagerly sought after by English Londoners. Niccolò Donati's widow Elizabeth, for instance, subsequently married Nicholas Holbourne. These widows also attracted English suitors who followed the same trade as their late husbands. Thomas Asby, for instance, married Margaret Mannucci, the widow and principal executrix of the Venetian draper Giovanni Mannucci. In the early 1460s, Mannucci had been responsible for the aulnage (official measurement of cloth) in the most notable cloth-producing areas of central southern England – Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire and the regional hub of the trade at Salisbury. His widow, who by London custom was entitled to a third of his estate,

²¹ LMA, DL/C/B/004/MS09171/006 fol. 143 (1474).

²² *Calendar of Letters from the Mayor and Corporation of the City of London c. AD 1350–1370*, ed. R. R. Sharpe (London, 1885), Roll II, no. 67, p. 171, 12 November 1369; *Facsimile of the First Volume of MS Archives of the Worshipful Company of Grocers of the City of London AD 1345–1463*, ed. J. A. Kingdon, 2 vols. (London, 1886), I, 17, dated 1348; CPR 1405–8, pp. 228–9, 1 April 1406.

inherited the residue 'therwith to do and dispose her owne free wille' and was thus a considerable matrimonial prize.²³

Italian citizens of London also provided an important link between the English and Italian communities by educating the next generation of young Englishmen in their trade. One of the Italian founder members of the Grocers' Company, known to them as Vivian Roger, employed a staff of sixteen in 1348, including the Sienese brothers Niccolò and Giovanni Donati. Among these sixteen staff were four English apprentices who were learning their trade from an Italian master in their formative years. One of these lads, William Eynesham, was perhaps the same man as William de Eynesham, elected some twenty years later in 1365 as a surveyor (local inspector and enforcer of standards) for the Grocers' Company with special responsibility for Bucklersbury.²⁴ Young Englishmen learning their trade in Italian workshops and offices in London would have come into contact with aliens from other countries in mainland Europe too. Like their English counterparts, Italian Londoners had strong business and personal connections with the Low Countries and Germany. Guido Portinari, for instance, had been born in Bruges and Leonardo Lambertini was usually resident there.²⁵ The Venetian Lorenzo Marcanova's London household in 1444 included two Cologners, called Bartholomew and Jenyn, while the Florentine Geronimo di Pigli retained the services of Severius 'Mastrik' (Maastricht) and Dederik Esterlyng in his establishment.²⁶

Italian use of London's secular courts and facilities for commercial credit

Italian merchants used London's secular courts, such as the mayor's court, to handle commercial matters. While differences of opinion arising between Italians belonging to the same city-state were heard within their own community, the English courts heard disputes between Italians from different city-states and between Italians and Englishmen. These latter cases were heard by a jury *de medietate linguae* (that is, by equal numbers of men of each nationality). The Italians felt that they had an advantage in these circumstances, claiming that they were

²³ CLBG, p. 306, 2 April 1373; CPR 1461–7, p. 448, 4 February 1466; CFR 1461–71, pp. 25, 26 November 1461; p. 26, 14 December 1461; TNA, PCC 11 Godyn (1465).

²⁴ Grocers' Archives, ed. Kingdon, I, 1, 9 May 1345; I, 17, dated 1348; CLBG, p. 204, 20 November 1365.

²⁵ TNA, PCC 24 Bodfelde (1524); LMA, DL/C/B/004/MS09171/008 fol. 46 (1492).

²⁶ TNA, E 179/144/54 m. 23.

more accustomed to fasting and could easily hold out for longer than the English whenever a jury found it hard to come to a verdict.²⁷ The London courts also heard cases involving business conflicts which had arisen abroad: letters of exchange unpaid in Bruges, for instance, or consignments on which the merchants' marks (which indicated ownership of the goods) had fraudulently been switched.²⁸ Another use of the courts was in matters of public record, when merchants wanted to have their arrangements legally acknowledged and made widely known. A merchant might, for example, appear in court to report the loss of his personal seal in order to prevent its use by thieves, in much the same way as we would cancel a stolen bank card. Alternatively, if he were going on a business trip abroad, he might want to inform the local merchant community of the names of the attorneys he had appointed to act in his absence. Documents drawn up abroad were eligible for enrolment in the City courts too. Datini's agents Domenico Caccini and Piero Cambini, whose association with the Tornabuoni was dissolved in Florence, presented the document to the London courts. Similarly the authorities in Bruges made available a certificate concerning the dissolution of Caccini and Cambini's own partnership, c. 1423–4, for production in England. This was a reciprocal arrangement, under which a similar function was discharged by the courts of other European cities. In Italy, for instance, a will made by the Venetian Giovanni Lipomano in London was later recorded by the courts in Venice.²⁹

The financial arrangements made between Londoners and Italians clearly demonstrate mutual confidence within the two communities. Like wills, commercial documents in London might sometimes be drawn up in Italian. In the early 1460s, the London merchant Thomas Weynslowe, for example, was able to dispute the validity of his contract with the Florentine Gherardo Canigiani, in which the Venetian Jacopo Falleron had acted as broker, as it had been 'wretten in lombard'.³⁰ The ready use which Englishmen made of London banking facilities to ease commercial transactions both at home and abroad – provided in the later 1430s by the Borromei and from the mid-1440s to mid-1460s by the Salviati – perhaps furnishes a happier example of Anglo-Italian cooperation. Between 1435 and 1439, as many as one hundred and

²⁷ CPMR 1323–64, p. 259 n. 3; *The Statutes of the Realm*, 11 vols. (London, 1810–28), I, 336, 27 Edward III st. 2 c. 8 (1353) and 348, 28 Edward III c. 13 (1354); *A Relation, or rather a true account, of the Island of England [...] about the year 1500*, ed. C. A. Sneyd, Camden Society 37 (London, 1847), pp. 32–3.

²⁸ CPMR 1364–81 p. 10, 5 December 1364; p. 158, 23 May 1373.

²⁹ CPMR 1364–81, p. 231, 26 November 1376; CPMR 1381–1412, pp. 294–6, 17 August 1409; TNA, C 47/13/10/1; LMA, CLC/521/MS 23740 (1438).

³⁰ TNA, C 1/27/329.

twenty English Londoners held accounts with the Borromei bank in the capital. Ninety-five of these Borromei bank customers of the late 1430s can be found a few years later, in the early 1440s, doing business with Italian merchants. Many of these Londoners included credit terms as part of their trading offer. Borromei account holders like the London mercer Hugh Wyche extended credit to Italians, and so too did provincials such as the wool dealers John Fortey of Cirencester (who gave the Salviati three years to pay) and John Bryddok of Northleach, the Wiltshire merchant John Wyke of Trowbridge and the Somerset cloth dealer John Estmond of Rode. Selling for cash and buying on credit was a normal means of doing business for Italian merchants.³¹ Those visitors who were domiciled in Venice could expect to enjoy the convenience of paying their London creditors in gold ducats after they returned home.³²

Although, naturally, London-resident Italian merchants who had extensive social and political connections in England would be provided with every facility to trade, it is quite clear that travellers with the Venetian galleys were not short of options either when it came to raising extra finance. In February 1441, for instance, the crews arriving in London were due six weeks' pay from their galleymasters at 39d per ducat, but over and above this entitlement they could ask for advances on their wages. Oarsmen, sailors and crossbowmen were allowed to anticipate one month's wages (and six weeks' worth for pilots) at 36d per ducat, with the opportunity for additional advances at the discretion of the galleymasters. Quite apart from this, galleyemen who wanted to trade formed groups to supplement their purchasing power, with local credit given by London merchants. In 1441–2, Giacomo Corner's galleyemen listed payment of 'old debts' among their expenses, suggesting an element of financial continuity between voyages.³³ Just like the galleyemen, the more well-heeled Venetians in London sometimes set aside part of the proceeds from their sales of Italian imports to pay

³¹ The Borromei Bank Research Project, ESRC R000239125, *The Ledger of Filippo Borromei & Company of Bruges, 1438*, trans. and cal. J. L. Bolton and F. Guidi Bruscoli, <http://www.queenmaryhistoricalresearch.org/roundhouse> [accessed 20 August 2017]; for the Salviati, see G. Holmes, 'Anglo-Florentine Trade in 1451', *EHR* 108 (1993), 371–86; A. F. Sutton, *The Mercery of London: Trade, Goods and People, 1130–1578* (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 228–9; TNA, E 101/128/36 m. 2, 3; G. Nordio, 'Lorenzo Marcanova in Inghilterra, fattore dello zio Giovanni (1440–1444)', in *Cittadini veneziani del Quattrocento: i due Giovanni Marcanova, il mercante e l'umanista*, ed. E. Barile, P. C. Clarke and G. Nordio (Venice, 2006), pp. 377–93 (pp. 387–8).

³² TNA, E 101/128/36 m. 1, bond to the draper John Beauchamp for £26 11s 10d at 46½d per ducat; similar arrangements were available for north Europeans to pay London mercers in Flemish currency at Antwerp, E101/128/37 fols. 3, 4.

³³ *Calendar of State Papers, Venice (CSP Ven)*, I, 65, 17 February 1441; TNA, E 101/128/36 m. 1; *Views of the Hosts of Alien Merchants*, ed. Bradley, section 48.

off their English creditors. Federico Corner and Carlo Contarini, for instance, raised over £4,800 from sales of spices and wines in 1442–3, of which they used nearly £800 to clear debts from the previous accounting period. In 1445, the Venetian senate exerted control over debts amounting to 14,000 ducats incurred by their business community in London, demanding to see copies of the registers and accounts kept by vice-consuls in London before 1432. The senate took steps concerning a debt of £400 specifically ‘so that the English creditors of the factory may consider themselves secure of that amount’.³⁴

Italian trade in London: Florentines

Datini’s agents spent most of the year trading in the capital. Although they sold a range of imported products, including the valuable dyestuff ‘grain’ as well as almonds, rice and soap, they preferred to focus on spices. They advised that ‘lle spezie sono q(ue)lla cosa di che più si fa p(r)ofitto i(n) q(ue)sto paese’.³⁵ Datini’s agents offered three types of ginger: *bel-lendino*, *colombino* and *michino*, matching ‘le Gynger belendyn Columbyn et Maykyn’ to be found in the Grocers’ Company records.³⁶ The agents also wrote from London to Italy giving tips on English culinary preferences and trading practices. They emphasized the importance of the English requirement that spices should be garbelled (that is, cleaned and the rubbish removed) before sale: ‘Tutte specierie si gha(r)bollano salvo zaff(erano) no(n) si gharbella’.³⁷ The agents relayed the information that the English ate plenty of fruit and almonds,³⁸ and reported a peak season for spices in July and August when English households planned to embark on preserving fruit and vegetables: ‘or(a) e pasato lor(o) stagione sono abasate forte [. . .] a luglio e aghosto poi chomincierà loro stagione’.³⁹

³⁴ *Views of the Hosts of Alien Merchants*, ed. Bradley, section 47; CSP Ven, I, 68–9, 19 October and 17 December 1445.

³⁵ ‘Spices are the thing from which one makes more profit in this country.’ Fondo Datini 312995, 25 October 1392.

³⁶ *Grocers’ Archives*, ed. Kingdon, I, 111, dated 1414–15; see also Gerrard de Malynes, *A Treatise of the Canker of Englands Common Wealth. Divided into three parts: Wherein the Author, imitating the rule of good Physitions, First, declareth the disease. Secondly, sheweth the efficient cause thereof. Lastly, a remedy for the same* (London, 1601), for ‘Ginger of Beledin in Calicut’ and ‘Ginger of Mechino’ listed under ‘The price of spices sold by the quintall’ in ‘Appendix’ (unpaginated).

³⁷ ‘All spices are garbelled except for saffron, which is not garbelled.’ Fondo Datini 702767, 7 September 1407.

³⁸ Fondo Datini 702767, 7 September 1407.

³⁹ ‘now their season is finished, they are much lower [in price] [. . .] their season will start in July and August’, Fondo Datini 509883, 26 March 1404.

Datini was also interested in buying English goods for export, and the agents bought cloth on his behalf. They had contacts in rural areas who manufactured lengths of cloth to order: 'Abiamo ordinato nel paese dove si fan(n)o d'averne di buoni il più presto si può.'⁴⁰ Although they could also obtain top quality London manufactures, they advised against it on the grounds of comparative costs: 'Pe(n)sia(mo) vi pare charo. I panni fini son(o) (qu)i più chari che chostà.'⁴¹ Instead, the majority of the agents' purchases consisted of ready-made cloth, which had been brought into the capital from the rural manufacturing areas and was then sold on by Londoners. London's Blackwell Hall was the home of the principal cloth market, and the agents are likely to have gone there to buy the Essex straits and Guildford blanket cloth known to them as *stretti d'(Es)sex* and *bianchetti d(i) Ghuidilforte*. Essex straits were narrow cloths, usually one yard wide by twelve to fourteen yards long and available in a variety of colours, while Guildford blanket was undyed, usually thirty-eight to forty-two yards long. These were cloths on which less custom was payable, because although straits were dyed, they had not been coloured with the most valuable type of red dye (grain). These lower-rated coloured cloths generated a considerable slice of the revenues on exports through London paid by the Italians to the English Crown in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.⁴² The presence of Italian shipping affected market prices in England. The agents noticed that the activities of Genoese merchants, buying for their home-bound carracks, pushed up prices: 'fino i Genovisi chominciera(nno) la investire p(er) le characche e seghuiranno sechondo la richiesta'. They also anticipated a drop in price levels after the Venetian galleys had loaded and sailed: 'sono saliti bianchetti d(i) Ghuidilforte d(enari) 8 in 8¼ ora partite le ghalie tan'tosto ap(r)esso speriamo a d(enari) 7½'.⁴³

As well as cloth, the agents exported wool for Datini but this entailed business trips away from London. Their wool purchases took them out to the Cotswold fairs, which started in June at Burford, known to the agents as *Borriforte*. Some, like Piero Cambini, looked forward to an early return to London to resume business at the shop: 'or(a) d(i) poi è futa la fiera d(i) Borriforte dove fu Domenicho e io Piero e Domenicho è ancora

⁴⁰ 'We have placed an order in the country where they are made, so as to have good [quality] as quickly as possible.' Fondo Datini 509982, 19 June 1401.

⁴¹ 'We think [this will] seem expensive to you. Fine cloths are dearer here than there.' Fondo Datini 509958, 14 March 1402.

⁴² Bradley, 'Italian Merchants in London', p. 179.

⁴³ 'until the Genoese start to buy for the carracks, and they [cloth prices] will follow according to the demand', Fondo Datini 509888, 10 May 1405; 'Guildford blankets have jumped [from] 8d to 8¼d. We are hoping for 7½d soon after the galleys [have] gone', Fondo Datini 308922, 20 September 1402.

là p(er) es(se)re a (quel)la d(i) Norleccio e io me ne son(o) venuto'.⁴⁴ Of the two men, Piero's partner Domenico Caccini was the acknowledged wool expert: 'No(n) ci è migliore laniere che Domenico.'⁴⁵ Naturally, Domenico stayed on for the next in the series of Cotswolds fairs at Northleach, which the agents called *Norleccio*, echoing the late fifteenth century English name 'Norlache' found in the Cely letters.⁴⁶ The agents primarily went into the Cotswolds to strike bargains at the annual fairs, but just like the Celys they took the opportunity to engage in extra business with local institutions and local people too. When buying wool from Cirencester Abbey, Datini's agents would have dealt with John Leckhampton, the abbot of Cirencester, in just the same way as the Celys made purchases from the rector of Abingdon.⁴⁷ They also dealt with 'q(u)e del paexe che fanno le pile'.⁴⁸ These rural people were local laymen who controlled storehouses of wool, which they had bought up from the producers who owned and raised the flocks. The agents, who might have been expected to refer to warehouse stock as *in monte*, adopted the usual English phrase 'in pile'.⁴⁹

In this vein, for instance, Richard Cely wrote to George Cely that 'the comford of youre letter cavsyd me for to bye of the forsayd Wyll Medewynter lx sacke of Cottys woll, the weche ys in pyle at Norlache'.⁵⁰ Datini's agents knew Midwinter's counterparts, upwardly-mobile Gloucestershire merchants such as William Grevel of Chipping Campden (whom they knew as *Grivello*) and Thomas Adynet of Northleach (*Tomaso Adinetto*). They particularly remarked upon the poor deal offered by William Grevel at his two storehouses, where he gave 'chattivo peso' ('bad weight').⁵¹ Although by law standard weights

⁴⁴ 'just now was the Burford fair, where Domenico and I, Piero, went and Domenico is still there to go to the one at Northleach, and I have returned', Fondo Datini 308918, 13 June 1402 (letter held over for a continuation dated 21 June).

⁴⁵ 'There is no better wool man here than Domenico.' Fondo Datini 700710, 1 December 1401.

⁴⁶ *The Cely Letters 1472-1488*, ed. A. Hanham, EETS Original Series 273 (London, 1975), p. 60, no. 67, l. 9, Richard Cely the elder at London to George Cely at Calais or Bruges, 6 November 1479.

⁴⁷ Fondo Datini 308922, 20 September 1402.

⁴⁸ 'those of the countryside who keep storehouses', Fondo Datini 9994, 30 June 1404.

⁴⁹ F. C. Lane, 'Family Partnerships and Joint Ventures in the Venetian Republic', *Journal of Economic History* 4 (1944), 178-96 (p. 182).

⁵⁰ *Cely Letters*, ed. Hanham, p. 60, no. 67, ll. 10-12, Richard Cely the elder at London to George Cely at Calais or Bruges, 6 November 1479; A. Hanham, *The Celys and their World* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 112, 114-5.

⁵¹ For Thomas Adynet see Fondo Datini 308922, 20 September 1402, and for William Grevel see 700708, 12 October 1401. See also N. Saul, *Knights and Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1981), p. 231.

should have been in use throughout England, the agents explained that in practice several different systems were used for measuring the weight of wool. The abbey's weights were not the same as those used by the local middlemen, and both of these sets of weights differed from those in use at the Calais Staple (the official outlet for English wool in northern Europe). In their letters written from London to Datini, the agents recalculated English weights to show the *peso di Firenze*, the equivalent Florentine weight, sometimes jotting their conversions in the margins of their letters.⁵²

Both in London and in the Cotswolds, the everyday business of Italian import-export merchants brought them into contact with a number of people who represented many different ranks of English society. A sale of imported spices in London, for example, meant that the Florentines had to pay the official weigher at the king's beam and tip him for fair treatment, engage a broker to act as intermediary with the buyer, and have obligations drawn up to guarantee payment. They also had to check the buyer's credit rating to make sure he was a good risk: 'gli avemo ardi[t]eme[n]te che buon[o] pagato[re] è'.⁵³ On the export side of their business, Datini's agents submitted expense accounts itemizing their outlay outside London, which show how closely they had to engage with ordinary English workers: the agents hired horses, took on servants, distributed tips in the sellers' house, bought food and drink for themselves and paid for lodgings, and supplied wine for the packers as well as buying canvas and cord for the work. Datini's agents used shipping at Southampton, known to them as *Antona* or *Ssuentona*, where one of the partners visited in person to supervise the export process: 'Domenicho n(ost)ro e andato a Ssuentona impacchare e charichare'.⁵⁴ They negotiated exit permits with the London sheriffs and used professional carters who were familiar with the route between Southampton and London. We know the names of some of the carters employed by Florentines at Southampton, both from records kept at the Bargate (the northern overland exit from Southampton) and from accounts by local hosts; Robert Gyssyche, for instance, carried silk to London in April 1440, while John Heckeley and William at Vode were hired in August 1441 to transport wool to the capital. These carters may originally have been taken on in Southampton for a return journey,

⁵² For abbey weight and country weight, Fondo Datini 308922, 20 September 1402; for Staple weight 9991, 16 November 1403 (postscript) and 700706, 29 August 1401. The latter shows Florentine weight noted in the margin.

⁵³ 'we know very well that he is a good payer', Fondo Datini 801733, 4 March 1398.

⁵⁴ 'Our Domenico has gone to Southampton to pack and load.' Fondo Datini 308924, 14 January 1403 (continuation 29 January).

to the capital and back again.⁵⁵ Datini's agents recorded the payments they made to porters to move bales of goods in and out of warehousing, the cost of protecting the bales with cushions of straw and the hire of small boats to ferry them from the shore out to load on the seagoing carracks. They paid the Southampton water-bailiff and covered the cost of export paperwork. They also made a payment to 'Ser Gian Lorenzo', John Laurence, one of the customs collectors at Southampton.⁵⁶ Most of English society came into contact with Italian merchants at some stage: from aristocratic households, merchants, weighers and brokers in London to people in provincial southern England ranging from ecclesiastics and merchant gentry in Gloucestershire to local officials, porters and boatmen in Hampshire.

Italian trade in London: Genoese and Venetians

During 1440–4, Englishmen acting as hosts to alien merchants were obliged by law to keep accounts – known as the 'Views of Hosts' – of their guests' business activities. The intention of parliament was to implement a simple balance of trade: the sums of money raised by aliens from the sales of their imports were to be spent by them on goods for export, allowing for reasonable expenses. Mayors were instructed to assign hosts to all alien merchants who did business within the town.

The results in London, where the alien population included many Italian long-term residents, citizens and denizens, were rather variable. Some hosts were unable, or perhaps unwilling, to obtain the required information. Genoese merchants largely relied upon transshipment of their bulk cargoes at Calshot, near Southampton, where goods were transferred from seagoing carracks to locally-owned boats heading round the coast for London. Their other cargoes were sent overland by cart from Southampton to the capital. Although they should have accounted to London hosts, most resident Genoese refused to do so. The draper Robert Clopton (who was to be mayor in 1441) met with defiance from the Genoese merchants Leonardo Cattaneo and Gregorio Pinelli and their clerks. Clopton confronted them personally in the parish of

⁵⁵ For Robert Gyssyche, see *Overland Trade Project: People, Places and Commodities 1430–1540*, ed. M Hicks, W. Harwood, A. Murdock and J. Branson, <http://www.overlandtrade.org> [accessed 20 August 2017]; for Heckeley and at Vode, see *Views of the Hosts of Alien Merchants*, ed. Bradley, section 53; M. Hicks, 'The Freight Transport of Southampton', in *English Inland Trade 1430–1540: Southampton and its Region*, ed. M. Hicks (Oxford, 2015), pp. 43–51 (p. 47).

⁵⁶ Fondo Datini 407476, dated May 1392. John Laurence is named as a collector with Philip Cake in TNA, E 122/138/20, dated 15–16 Richard II.

St Edmund in Langbourn ward on 11 April 1440, asking them to give him oversight and management in accordance with the statute, but reported that they refused to account at all and he was unable to find out anything about their trading activities. Another host, John Chichele, described a similar stand-off with the Genoese Luca Vivaldi and his household. Chichele had no better luck with the Venetian galleymaster Vittore Cappello, who had made over £1,700-worth of sales and bought English goods worth only about £650, and claimed to have spent the difference between the two sums on wages for sailors, crossbowmen, pilots and caulkers. Chichele drew another blank with the Venetian Geronimo Dandolo, whom he knew had sold spices and luxury fabrics worth more than £1,500 and bought less than £500-worth of English cloth, wool and tin. Dandolo, explained Chichele, did not want to account for the money on the grounds that he and his sons were newly made denizens.⁵⁷

However, other hosts had much more fruitful relationships with the alien merchants assigned to them. Federico Corner's business between Easter 1440 and Michaelmas 1443 was fully detailed by his host, the vintner Thomas Walsingham; and Lorenzo Marcanova accounted from Michaelmas 1440 to Easter 1444 to the mercer Thomas Chalton in a continuous series of reports.⁵⁸ Where the host was able to give a detailed report, the clients and suppliers listed by Italian companies were clearly socially diverse. The view for Giovanni Micheli's household, made just after the parliament of 1442, shows that they did business with the keeper of the king's wardrobe, two earls, four lords and the MP for Reigate, as well as a Spanish knight and a number of esquires.⁵⁹ At other times, they also met the shopping needs of Adam Moleyns (clerk to the royal council 1438, keeper of the privy seal 1444, bishop of Chichester 1445) and the Danish-born Sir Andrew Ogard (once chamberlain to John duke of Bedford). Among the suppliers to Italians were well-known provincial merchants like the Somerset cloth dealer John Gawter of Beckington and the Burford woolman Thomas Brampton.⁶⁰ However, the majority of those dealing with the Italians were members of the greater London livery companies, who bought and sold in bulk in the capital. Many of these men ran distribution networks of local traders and travelling chapmen in the provinces and preferred that English provincial and alien merchants should be confined to trading through the

⁵⁷ H. L. Bradley, 'Southampton's Trading Partners: London', in *English Inland Trade*, ed. Hicks, pp. 65–80 (p. 67); *Views of the Hosts of Alien Merchants*, ed. Bradley, sections 13, 14.

⁵⁸ *Views of the Hosts of Alien Merchants*, ed. Bradley, sections 4–10, 43–7.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, section 30.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, sections 7, 29; for Moleyns and Ogard, section 34.

capital.⁶¹ Among the men dealing with the Italians were, for instance, the grocer Richard Keterich, mercer John Cotford, draper Richard Kent, vintner William de Lunes (born in Gascony) and the skinner Christopher Warter. The female relatives of London liverymen also bargained with the Italians. The silkwoman Ellen Langwith (supplier to the king's wardrobe and wife of the tailor John Langwith) and Isabel Donyngton (sister of the grocer Ralph Stokes) were among twenty-three independent female customers who bought silk, mostly by the pound weight, from the Contarini and Marcanova households.⁶²

Italian trade in London: Londoners

The Italian residents of London were well known to their neighbours and they had extensive longstanding contacts among the families who dominated the City's social, economic and civic structure. Yet these relationships were prone to ugly outbursts on the part of English Londoners. Occasionally these incidents led to a serious and well-documented breakdown of law and order such as occurred in the summer of 1457, but at other times small manifestations of unpleasantness were more easily contained. In 1365, for example, the Florentine Jacopo Dini complained to the City authorities against a whitetawyer (worker in fine leather goods) called John Rothewelle, who had contemptuously dislodged his hat. Like Chaucer's Merchant, Jacopo had worn 'uppon his heed a Flaundrisch bever hat', a fashionable piece of headgear which had to be imported from Bruges and was not made in London.⁶³ Jacopo was neither a stranger nor a newcomer; he was a London citizen, whose family was well established in the capital. His father Piero had worked for the Peruzzi in London during the 1340s, his brother Niccolò's family was living in the parish of St Mary Woolnoth, and Jacopo himself had extensive business dealings with the Alberti (to whom administration of his estate was later committed). Jacopo took his place alongside Robert Braybroke, bishop of London, among the executors named by Datini's agent Piero Marchi. Jacopo lived in the parish of St Nicholas Acon (which adjoined the parish where his brother lived) with his daughter Margaret

⁶¹ Sutton, *Mercery of London*, pp. 212–6, 283–4; P. Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community: The Grocers' Company and the Politics and Trade of London, 1000–1485* (New Haven, 1995), pp. 439–40; I. W. Archer, *The History of the Haberdashers' Company* (Chichester, 1991), pp. 30–1.

⁶² *Views of the Hosts of Alien Merchants*, ed. Bradley, sections 4, 16.

⁶³ Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, gen. ed. L. D. Benson, 3rd edn (Boston MA, 1987), 'General Prologue', l. 272 (p. 27). See also the note to this line on p. 809.

until the mid-1390s. Margaret's friends were English, and she knew the household of William More (mayor 1395) well enough to leave bequests to four of his female employees.⁶⁴ Despite the elevated socioeconomic status of his family, their friends in the Italian and English communities and their long residence in the City, Jacopo's expensive imported alien-made hat was enough to provoke the anger of a man whose place was on a much lower rung of the social ladder.

Fifteenth-century London had an increasing reputation for hostility towards aliens and this hostility peaked noticeably in the City, on the north bank of the Thames. Southwark, by contrast, situated south of the river and heavily settled by north European migrant craftsmen operating outside the reach of regulations set by the livery companies, enjoyed a mix of continental traditions and social groupings. The Italian merchants whose households clustered toward the central City wards began to encounter formal exclusion from the commercial and political administration of the areas where they had chosen to work and live. From 1401, only Englishmen could be brokers (that is, intermediaries between buyer and seller), which prevented resident alien citizens, even those who were fluent in English, from negotiating agreements between English traders and their visiting alien counterparts.⁶⁵ After 1413, only the English-born sons of English fathers were allowed to stand for election as aldermen (that is, representatives of their wards), which effectively barred second-generation immigrants – the English-born children of resident alien citizens – from local office. These second-generation Italians were not only excluded from serving their wards but also as a consequence were unable to reach the highest rungs of the civic ladder: the offices of sheriff and mayor.⁶⁶ From 1427, London required aliens to accept denization if they wanted the freedom.⁶⁷ Aliens fared no better in parliament, which was convinced that they were draining England's wealth by taking abroad the profits from their English sales. Parliament sought to enforce a strict balance of trade, whereby alien merchants were forced to spend income from their sales on English goods for export and to account to their English hosts.

⁶⁴ CPMR 1364–81, p. 21, 20 February 1365; CPR 1345–8, p. 257, 8 March 1347; LMA, DL/C/B/004/MS09171/001 fol. 375 (1396); DL/C/B/004/MS09171/001 fol. 352 (1395); DL/C/B/004/MS09171/001 fol. 364v (1396); DL/C/B/004/MS09171/001 fol. 374v (1396).

⁶⁵ M. Carlin, *Medieval Southwark* (London, 1996), pp. 153–4, 157–62; CLBI, p. 12, 2 Henry IV. From 1452, brokers had to be English-born, thus excluding alien-born denizens, CLBK, p. 351, 15 December 1452.

⁶⁶ CLBI, p. 117, 16 October 1413.

⁶⁷ LMA, COL/CC/01/01/002 fol. 90, 20 February 1427.

The anti-alien legislation of the fifteenth century has been attributed to the dependence of the new Lancastrian dynasty upon parliament and London for money. London interests in overseas trade were well represented in parliament by the city's own MPs and supported by gentrified London merchants settled on newly-acquired estates in the home counties (that is, the counties situated around London). Furthermore, from the 1430s Londoners dominated the Staple (that is, the organization which sold wool). Naturally, the merchants who belonged to the Staple found common cause with the rural gentry, many of whom were either sheep farmers or involved as middlemen in the supply chain. A coalescence of interests between the provincial gentry, Commons burghesses (that is, parliamentary representatives of towns) and Londoners had exerted political influence on the government in the later 1370s.⁶⁸ In the fifteenth century, the City spent money on promoting its viewpoint in parliament, where its MPs were punctilious in their attendance and its livery companies also petitioned the Commons. It has been estimated that a London-led lobby within the House of Commons could easily count on the support of between thirty and fifty MPs.⁶⁹

This increasing belligerence in parliament, led by Londoners, has often been traced to English diplomatic and military reversals in northern Europe which reached a tipping point with the siege of Calais in 1436. As a result, firstly the commercial opportunities which Londoners had taken for granted in northern Europe were curtailed, and secondly south-east England was left in acute fear of invasion. And yet civic and parliamentary hostility is evident much earlier than the late 1430s. It was in 1390, during the reign of Richard II and almost a decade before the Lancastrian accession, that aliens were originally required to buy English goods to half the value of their imports.⁷⁰ This coincided with the rescheduling of the Venetian fleet to bring two galleys a year into London as part of the northern voyage to Flanders. The galleys brought a tremendous influx of luxury goods, targeting the aristocracy and gentry who were spending increasing amounts of time in London. The *Libelle of Englyshe Polycye*, a political poem thought to have been written c. 1436, sought to emphasize the importance

⁶⁸ J. S. Roskell, L. Clark and C. Rawcliffe, *The House of Commons 1386–1421*, 4 vols., The History of Parliament Trust (Stroud, 1992), I, 499, 501; Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile Community*, pp. 447–8; P. Nightingale, 'Capitalists, Crafts and Constitutional Change in Late Fourteenth-Century London', *Past and Present* 124 (1989), 3–35 (pp. 15–16).

⁶⁹ C. M. Barron, 'London and Parliament in the Lancastrian Period', *Parliamentary History* 9 (1990), 343–67 (pp. 353–4, 356, 358, 360–1); J. L. Bolton, 'The City and the Crown, 1456–61', *London Journal* 12.1 (1986), 11–24 (p. 19).

⁷⁰ *Statutes of the Realm*, II, 76, 14 Richard II c. 1 (1390), confirmed after the accession of Henry IV, II, 122, 2 Henry IV c. 5 (1400–1).

of the English defence of Calais and control of the seas between England and France. In doing so the *Libelle* examined the nature of alien trade and, in a section headed 'The commodites and nycetees of Venicyans and Florentynes with there galees', represented galley imports as

Apes and japes and marmusettes taylede,
Nifles, trifles, that litell have availed.⁷¹

Amusements and frivolities such as these were deliberately linked in popular literature to personal vanity, pride and sin. In particular, the double allusion to apes and marmosets, to the medieval mind, was redolent of female sensuality and consequent temptation.⁷²

Venetian trade was at its height soon after the *Libelle* was written, at the time of the Views of Hosts. The parliamentary statute which prompted the Views was passed in 1439, requiring all aliens to report to the civic authorities so that these might assign local English hosts. The hosts were to keep written records of all business transacted by the aliens for whom they had oversight, and to deliver a copy of these records to the Exchequer at the start of the Easter and Michaelmas terms, beginning in 1440.⁷³ Fifty-two Views have survived for alien trade in London, and twenty-five of them (that is, 48%) were for Italian businesses. Of these twenty-five Italian Views, there are twenty (that is, 80%) covering Venetian trade. The annual arrival of the galleys created a number of pinch points, both for the artisan freemen (that is, the yeomanry) and merchants (that is, the livery) who belonged to the London craft companies. Galley imports of small manufactures were a major source of friction with craftsmen already struggling against a rising tide of alien migrant labour from northern Europe. Fashionable alien-produced goods, which undercut the traditional English product in price and were moreover regarded as rather more stylish than the domestic output, were condemned in the 1450s and 1460s by pinner and silkwomen (among others) as a major factor in causing unemployment.⁷⁴ The Grocers' Company (in 1414–15) and the Skinners' Company (in 1433) exercised their right of search for substandard merchandise arriving in the City on the galleys.⁷⁵

⁷¹ *The Libelle of Englyshe Polycye: A Poem on the Use of Sea-Power* 1436, ed. G. Warner (Oxford, 1926), p. 18, lines 348–9.

⁷² H. Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (London, 1952), pp. 109, 133, 178–9.

⁷³ *Statutes of the Realm*, II, 303–5, 18 Henry VI c. 4 (1439).

⁷⁴ *CLBK*, pp. 333–8, craft petitions dated 3 August 1450, 30 March 1451, 6 April 1451, 23 July 1451; *Rot. Parl.* V, 325 (1455) and 506–8 (1463–4), *Statutes of the Realm*, II, 395–8, 3 Edward IV c. 3–4 (1463).

⁷⁵ *Grocers' Archives*, ed. Kingdon, I, 111, dated 2 Henry V; *CLBK*, pp. 170–1, 27 September 1433.

On the other hand, however, galley imports were welcomed by some Londoners. Quite a few of the City's liverymen could support upwardly-mobile family lifestyles on the profits from selling on the damasks, velvets, spices, sugar, coconuts and ivory combs which they had purchased from the Venetians. Nor was it quite true, as alleged by the *Libelle*, that galley imports consisted of luxuries which Englishmen could very well manage without:

And thynges wyth whiche they fetely blere oure eye,
Wyth thynges not enduryng that we bye.
For moche of thys chaffare that is wastable
Mighte be forborne for dere and dysseuable.⁷⁶

On the contrary, the Venetian galleys dealt in much that was useful. Saltpetre was used to manufacture gunpowder. Both silk (for high-end small decorative wares and embroidery) and wax (for use in churches and especially at funerals) were also used by fletchers to make flights for arrows. The properties of pepper and ginger were common knowledge among women seeking to prevent pregnancy, and other spices and minerals brought by the galleys had medicinal uses. Many were emetics or purgatives, while others had healing properties. Sal ammoniac, for instance, was used in dressing battlefield wounds.⁷⁷

Whereas ready-made alien manufactures imported on the galleys were bitterly resented by London's artisan yeomanry, it was galley exports which posed a greater problem for the wealthy merchants on the livery. These liverymen were already fighting recession, bullion shortage and the closure of their familiar European markets before they had been able to build new outlets through Antwerp. The galleys took English wool straight past the Calais Staple (the main outlet for sales of wool by English merchants, particularly Londoners) and loaded huge quantities of English cloth for onward transit from the Mediterranean to the Middle East. Moreover, Venetian merchants were not limited by the loading capacity of the galleys which had come to London. Local boats ferried any remaining Italian export cargo from London down to Sandwich for transfer to the rest of the Venetian fleet on the homebound leg from Flanders.

Southampton provided another pick-up point on the return trip

⁷⁶ *Libelle*, ed. Warner, p. 19, lines 350–3.

⁷⁷ *CPR 1436–41*, p. 573, 3 May 1441; J. M. Riddle, 'Contraception and Early Abortion in the Middle Ages', in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. V. L. Bullough and J. A. Brundage (New York, 1996), pp. 261–77 (pp. 261–4); L. G. Matthews, *The Royal Apothecaries* (London, 1967), p. 42.

from London and Flanders. From Michaelmas 1440 to Easter 1441, for example, the Venetian Corner-Contarini partnership sold over £1,000-worth of imports; but they spent nearly three times as much on cloth, all bought from Londoners for export. Their host, the vintner Thomas Walsingham, made a separate note that it was all exported on two Venetian galleys currently in London and two more coming to Southampton from Flanders.⁷⁸ This more than met the requirement of English legislation that the value of exports must balance that of imports, but it still did not satisfy Londoners. While their own role in the trade was confined to local sales and purchases with their Venetian counterparts, Londoners observed how much English-made cloth was taken by the galleys from England for sale in the markets of Constantinople and the Levant. Londoners as yet had no shipping routes of their own and no professional contacts in the Mediterranean. The English did not gain control over shipping of their exports until the sixteenth century, and sporadic attempts to extend their reach into the western Mediterranean were both unwelcome and unsuccessful. Datini's correspondents in Genoa, for example, recounted the arrival of two English ships in Marseille at the end of April 1389. They were considered lucky to have reached the port, having between them broken a mast and lost a rudder.⁷⁹

The extension of the Venetian galley trade to London as part of the Flanders voyage in the later fourteenth century brought with it noticeable economic dislocation and a remarkable (albeit temporary) influx of galleyemen who had joined the Venetian fleets at various points *en route* from the far side of the Mediterranean. The two galleys which usually came to London required manning levels of four hundred hands or more, and the stopover period at the London terminus saw these sailors in the City's streets and markets for up to six months at a time. Most of them were markedly different from the literate, numerate and well-to-do Italian resident merchants of the City, many of whom were fluent English speakers who were partly or wholly embedded in the local community. Galleyemen like Niccolò Trebizond, Dimitri da Rumania and Mustapha dalla Drin, who were in London during 1435–6, typically brought small amounts of exotic items to trade: currants, sugar and spices, ivory combs, carpets, monkeys (as mentioned in the *Libelle*), parrots and even parrot seed.⁸⁰ The Venetian use of such mixed crews on extended trading routes meant that the galleys brought with them a wealth of languages and cultures originating from south-east Europe

⁷⁸ *Views of the Hosts of Alien Merchants*, ed. Bradley, section 44.

⁷⁹ Fondo Datini 511157, 13 May 1389.

⁸⁰ TNA E 122/76/34 m. 3, 10v; for parrot seed, m. 10v, 11.

through to the Middle East. London had a strong north European and Dutch linguistic heritage, based upon a long tradition of economic cooperation. English merchants at Bruges and Calais used Flemish loan words, such as *gruff* (Flemish *groof*) to describe coarse wool, and the two languages were sufficiently similar to present little difficulty in business communications.⁸¹ Before the advent of the Venetian galleys in the late fourteenth century, most Londoners had little if any personal experience of east Mediterranean cultures on an everyday basis. The evidence from names recorded by fifteenth-century customs collectors, hosts and tax collectors in London shows an increasing number of Venetians, but along with them were many others from further afield, especially Albanians, Croatians, Rumanians and Greeks.

Conclusion

Italian merchants resident in London were established in their own independent households, mostly within the north-east quarter of the City, where they accommodated their colleagues and employees as well as visiting Italians. They participated actively in joint policy-making meetings organized by their city-state communities, and also enjoyed a wide variety of English affiliations which both resulted from and promoted their business interests. They had English friends and neighbours and worshipped at local parish churches, although they retained a special fondness for Austin Friars. Some became English denizens or took up citizenship so that they might open a shop, move their goods free of tolls and join the London livery companies which governed their trades. They taught English apprentices alongside other north European employees in their workshops and offices. Although selling their imported goods and buying cloth kept them in London most of the time, they regularly travelled out of the City to buy wool in the Cotswolds and to supervise the packing and loading of their goods for export from Southampton. Many were partially but quite comfortably integrated into English society: they may have been Florentine, Genoese or Venetian, but they were also Londoners. Some married Englishwomen and raised families

⁸¹ L. Wright, 'Trade between England and the Low Countries: Evidence from Historical Linguistics', in *England and the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. C. M. Barron and N. Saul (Stroud, 1995), pp. 169–79 (pp. 169–72); L. Wright, 'Medieval Latin, Anglo-Norman and Middle English in a Civic London Text: An Inquisition of the River Thames, 1421', in *De mot en mot. Aspects of Medieval Linguistics: Essays in Honour of William Rothwell*, ed. S. Gregory and D. A. Trotter (Cardiff, 1997), pp. 223–60, (pp. 254–5); Hanham, *Celys and their World*, pp. 113, 217–18.

Italian Merchants in the City of London

in London. They readily used the City's courts, both in matters of probate and to settle commercial disputes, and entered into credit arrangements with English businessmen. Anglo-Italian cultural contact in London in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was not simply a matter of sharing literature, drama, music and art among those few who had the leisure to enjoy it. Instead, it was a matter of people of all social ranks working together on a daily basis to earn a living (and, with luck, to make a profit). Italian trade in London brought with it communication between a wide variety of cultures, both alien and English. It provided a meeting point where merchants from Florence, Genoa and Venice together with sailors from the Greek islands and the Balkans might encounter English provincial merchant gentry, carters, porters and boatmen, as well as London's wholesale merchants and their employees.

Political Joachism and the English Franciscans: The Rumour of Richard II's Return

Victoria Flood

In the years following Richard II's deposition by his cousin Henry IV, rumours concerning his survival were in abundance.¹ As Simon Walker has observed, these were 'nourished in the fertile ground of prophetic speculation'.² Certainly, this was a period of considerable prophetic activity, and I suggest that the rumour of Richard's return may, at least in one of its earliest forms, owe a considerable debt to contemporary prophecy. I refer to the claims of a number of Franciscan friars in the years 1401–2, who prophesied the old king's return to do battle against the new. The details of this prophetic activity survive only as shadowy allusions in contemporary chronicles, but there is a distinctive political-literary context on which we might draw to understand the uses of prophecy among the English Franciscans during this period.³

¹ P. N. McNiven, 'Rebellion, Sedition and the Legend of Richard II's Survival', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 72 (1990), 93–117; S. Walker, *Political Culture in Later Medieval England*, ed. M. Braddick (Manchester, 2006), ch. 7; M. Evans, *The Death of Kings: Royal Deaths in Medieval England* (London, 2007), p. 169. The argument pursued in this chapter draws on Walker's criticism of analysis of the type presented by Evans, which regarded the legend of Richard's return as an engagement with a mythic structure of the type associated with 'sleeping kings'. Rather, as Walker suggests, we might better understand it as a fully politicized and culturally specific point of engagement. For an overview of political prophecies in circulation in the early years of the reign of Henry IV, see P. Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399–1422* (New Haven, 1998), pp. 6–9; H. Fulton, 'Arthurian Prophecy and the Deposition of Richard II', *Arthurian Literature* 22 (2005), 64–83. For full-length discussions of medieval English political prophecy, see V. Flood, *Prophecy, Politics and Place in England: From Geoffrey of Monmouth to Thomas of Erceldoune* (Cambridge, 2016); L. A. Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs in Later Medieval England* (York, 2000); R. Taylor, *Political Prophecy* (New York, 1911).

² Walker, *Political Culture*, p. 43.

³ For the fullest discussion of the trials to date, see D. W. Whitfield, 'Conflicts of Personality and Principle: The Political and Religious Crisis in the English Franciscan Province, 1400–1409', *Franciscan Studies* 17 (1957), 321–45.

This chapter considers Franciscan, and broader monastic, English engagements with prophetic texts inspired by the prophetic exegeses of Joachim of Fiore, the twelfth-century Calabrian abbot and founder of the monastery of San Giovanni.⁴ This material blurred the division between the sacred and secular, and gave ecclesiastical authors a mechanism through which they might withstand tyrants and hail imperial heroes. A prophetic vogue that began in southern Italy during the early thirteenth century, political Joachite texts circulated across Europe, and, I suggest, came to determine the shape of political involvements among the English Franciscans in the troubled years of the early fifteenth century. This is an important period in the history of English political prophecy: during these years the earliest legislation against the dissemination of political prophecies was introduced, in 1402, and again in 1406.⁵ Although the wording of these laws suggests that they were directed against the Welsh in 1402, and in 1406 against the Lollards (whose own engagements with prophecy remain obscure), they might be more fully understood as a response to a broader contemporary prophetic oppositional vogue, a movement in which the Franciscans stood front and centre.

The return rumour

The rumour of Richard's return appears to have first taken root among Franciscan friars in Norfolk towards the end of 1401 or early 1402, and reappeared in the spring of 1402 at a number of houses in the English Midlands, at Aylesbury, Leicester and Northampton. The fullest account of the trials of friars charged with the dissemination of the rumour is preserved in the first continuation of the *Eulogium historiarum*.⁶ Its

⁴ The most important resource on Joachim of Fiore and his reception history remains M. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1993). See also Reeves, 'The Development of Apocalyptic Thought: Medieval Attitudes', in *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature*, ed. C. A. Patrides and J. Wittreich (Manchester, 1984), pp. 40–72; Reeves, 'Joachimist Influences on the Idea of a Last World Emperor', in *Joachim of Fiore in Christian Thought: Essays on the Influence of the Calabrian Prophet*, ed. D. West, 2 vols. (New York, 1975), I, 511–58; Reeves and M. W. Bloomfield, 'The Penetration of Joachimism into Northern Europe', *Speculum* 29 (1954), 772–93.

⁵ Taylor, *Political Prophecy*, p. 105. This legislation has also been understood in relation to the suppression of revelatory literature in England, for which see K. Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion: Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, 2006), p. 17.

⁶ *Eulogium historiarum sive temporis*, ed. F. S. Haydon, 3 vols., Rolls Series 9 (London, 1858–63), III, 389–94. For a discussion of the composition of the *Eulogium*

narrative begins with the accusation against a priest friar of Aylesbury by a lay brother, concerning his dissemination of the rumour. The chronicler records that when asked directly whether he had published the news that Richard lived, the friar of Aylesbury replied, 'Exultavi sicut homo exultat de vita amici sui' ('I rejoiced as a man rejoices in the life of his friend').⁷ This turn of phrase strikes me as odd, for Richard does not appear to have been a notable friend of the order – and we shall return to it presently. The friar of Aylesbury stated his opposition to Henry, insofar as he had the right to be duke of Lancaster, but not king. Richard was the true royal friend of his order, and the friar maintained that were he to see Richard and Henry in battle, the former would receive his aid. The friar was executed along with a secular priest of Westminster. Walker has observed something of an anti-Lancastrian movement among elements of the clergy at Westminster during this period, and clearly the friar of Aylesbury was not alone in his dedication to Richard's cause.⁸ This was the first Franciscan execution related to this particular charge of sedition.

The second was a larger case, later in 1402. Here the rumour emerges as the work of the Franciscan 'arch-conspirator' (as he has been termed by D. W. Whitfield), Richard (or Roger) Frisby, a senior friar and doctor of divinity at the Leicester convent.⁹ Frisby's case appears in the account of the *Eulogium*, where he is identified as a 'magister' of Oxford, a theologian. Oxford featured largely in Frisby's seditious programme: his accusers charged him with a plan to mobilize an assembly of five hundred men on the common at Oxford on the Vigil of St John the Baptist, where they would join with the forces of the returning Richard. In the face of cross-examination, under interrogation from the king himself, Frisby points out that he did not say Richard lived, rather that if he did live, he was the rightful king of England; and if he were dead, then it was Henry who had killed him. Frisby frames a challenge to Henry's kingship: the deposition of Richard was illegal (he maintains that Richard did not resign the crown freely), and Henry's rule is illegitimate – he is the duke of Lancaster but not the king. Frisby and the

and its later continuations, see G. B. Stow, 'The Continuation of the *Eulogium Historiarum*: Some Revisionist Perspectives', *EHR* 119 (2004), 667–81. An account of the Franciscan conspiracy is also found in *An English Chronicle of the Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V and Henry VI, written before the year 1471*, ed. J. S. Davies (London, 1856), pp. 23–26. We might note that the *Eulogium* itself contains a number of Joachite political prophecies. See R. Nissé, 'Prophetic Nations', *New Medieval Literatures* 4 (2001), 95–115; M. W. Bloomfield, *Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth-Century Apocalypse* (New Brunswick, 1962), p. 87.

⁷ *Eulogium*, III, 390.

⁸ Walker, *Political Culture*, pp. 158–9.

⁹ Whitfield, 'Conflicts of Personality', p. 328.

friars involved in the rumour were executed, along with an Augustinian prior from Launde in Leicestershire, and their heads were sent to towns across the Midlands, including Frisby's headquarters at Leicester. Frisby appears to have had prophetic precedent in mind for his charges against Henry, and the expectations placed on Richard. The *Eulogium* chronicler describes his charges before the king: 'unus Magister in Theologia senex qui male loquitur de vobis, et dixit quod Ricardus bellabit contra vos, et dicit quod hoc est prophetatum' ('an old Master in Theology who speaks evil of you [Henry], and says that Richard shall wage war on you, and that this is prophesied').¹⁰

The Franciscans, political Joachism and the English circulation of Joachite texts

The particular interest of members of the Franciscan order in Richard during this period has struck modern commentators as odd. There was no particular connection between Richard and the Franciscans beyond his granting of special protection to the order in 1385, which was renewed by Henry IV in 1401 (there was little to distinguish the two kings in this respect). We might also note that Richard chose his confessors from the Dominicans.¹¹ However, there is another way in which we might make sense of the Franciscan attitude towards Richard during the early fifteenth century: the place of secular rulers in an eschatological framework of particular Franciscan interest.

For this, we need to look to the historical engagements of the Spiritual Franciscans with the prophetic exegetical writings of Joachim of Fiore. In his tripartite schema of history, Joachim forecast a coming third status, ushered in by the arrival of Antichrist. This was to be a time of great tribulation for a new class of spiritual men, who had within themselves the capacity to withstand these hardships and bring about a period of spiritual renewal (*renovatio mundi*) prior to the Last Judgement. Joachim's location of these events within rather than beyond human history gave a contemporary impetus, even urgency, to this expectation, and it is no surprise that his schema saw subsequent political applications.¹² Although the earliest disseminators of Joachim's writings

¹⁰ *Eulogium*, III, 391; Whitfield, 'Conflicts of Personality', pp. 328–9.

¹¹ Whitfield, 'Conflicts of Personality', p. 334.

¹² The importance of this innovation has been noted by Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, p. 305; R. W. Southern, 'Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 3. History as Prophecy', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 22 (1972), 159–80 (p. 176).

were the Florentian and Cistercian houses of southern Italy, from the mid-thirteenth century the new Franciscan houses of Calabria embraced it with enthusiasm, and integrated Joachim's ideas within their own sense of a continuing mission.¹³ For the Spiritual Franciscans, St Francis represented the realization of Joachim's new spiritual man, a harbinger of the third status. Through this perception, the order came into possession of an important eschatological destiny, with an obligation to direct the activities of popes, emperors and kings towards the fulfilment of Joachim's vision.¹⁴

However, although the Franciscans provided an important impetus to the broader dissemination of Joachimite prophecy (in particular, we might note the role played by the *fraticelli*),¹⁵ there was a pre-existing English interest in Joachimite prophecy and its possible applications to the political and secular sphere from the very earliest period. In his *Chronica*, written between c. 1192 and his death in 1201/2, Roger of Howden records Richard I's audience with Joachim at Messina, on the way to the Third Crusade. Joachim expounded on the seven-headed dragon of Revelation 12. 3, declaring that Antichrist had already been born in Rome and would one day become a false pope – although he had not yet come to power. In his later revision of the account, Roger extended this to include an account of the seven tyrannies of the dragon, including the scourge of the Saracens.¹⁶ Although the authenticity of this exchange has been subject to criticism, Marjorie Reeves has argued that it does contain a core compatible with Joachim's own writings – a similar conceptualization is found in Joachim's *Expositio in Apocalypsim* ('Exposition on the Apocalypse of St John'), although the fifth head of the dragon is there designated as the emperor Henry IV, an identification which does not appear in Howden's account.¹⁷ We might note, even in its earliest form, the capability within early Joachimite prophecy for the criticism of worldly tyranny – a fundamental tenet, I would suggest, of

¹³ Reeves and Bloomfield, 'Penetration of Joachimism', p. 774. For a discussion of the Franciscan response see Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 175–228.

¹⁴ For consideration of the Franciscan 'mission', see E. R. Daniel, *The Franciscan Concept of Mission in the High Middle Ages* (Lexington, 1974).

¹⁵ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 191–228.

¹⁶ Benedict of Peterborough, *Gesta regis Henrici secundi Benedicti abbatis*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols., Rolls Series 49 (London, 1867), I, 151–5 (this work is now generally attributed to Roger of Howden); Roger of Howden, *Chronica magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, ed. W. Stubbs, 4 vols., Rolls Series 51 (London, 1868–71), III, 75; Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 6–8; Reeves and Bloomfield, 'Penetration of Joachimism', p. 775.

¹⁷ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 8–9.

its uses in early fifteenth century England. This is a point to which we shall return.

The Messina episode neatly encapsulates the twin interests which fuelled the hold of the Joachite tradition on western European religious imaginations: the calculation of the coming of Antichrist and the beginning of the End Times; and the conceptualization of *renovatio*.¹⁸ We might note also the political capabilities latent in Joachim's schema. Although Joachim does not appear to have dwelt on this at any length, Richard I is reputed to have asked him when Jerusalem might be reconquered by the Christian armies of Western Europe. Joachim replied that it would be reconquered one day, but not yet. This crusading impetus played a large part in the politicization of the Joachite tradition, held in application to the behaviours of kings and emperors, and this was almost certainly at the core of the English king's interest in the prophet.

Fundamental to the politicization of Joachite prophecy is its early cross-pollination with a strand of sibylline political prophecy concerning the Last World, or Roman, Emperor. The figure of the Emperor appears as a reformer who ushers in a golden age, offering a brief respite from the turmoil of the reign of Antichrist which follows (although, on occasion, the two came to be positioned as contemporaries). This vision is in large part indebted to an older Jewish messianism, looking forward to Jewish rule in Palestine and a new age of peace and abundance, and Last World Emperor-prophecy is similarly invested in the Christian reconquest of this region. The motif owes its medieval European circulation to the prophecy of Pseudo-Methodius, composed in the eastern empire at the end of the seventh century.¹⁹ A king of the Greeks or Romans who arrives during a period of mounting evil and sets all to rights, he provided a neat fit as a herald of the third Joachite status. Furthermore, the Roman connection made him a natural counterpart to the Angelic Pope, an apocryphal manifestation of Joachim's new class of spiritual men, who appears in later Joachite prophecy. Prophecy concerning the Last World Emperor has a long medieval history and was particularly prevalent during the First Crusade; it was – after all – crusading material, invested not just in a spiritual but a decidedly material empire.

Importantly, this model departs from Joachim's own conceptualization of *renovatio*, which was a spiritual rather than a political enterprise.

¹⁸ Reeves and Bloomfield, 'Penetration of Joachimism', p. 775.

¹⁹ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 306–19; Reeves, 'Joachimist Influences on the Idea of a Last World Emperor', pp. 511–58; P. J. Alexander, 'The Diffusion of Byzantine Apocalypses in the Medieval West and the Beginnings of Joachimism', in *Prophecy and Millenarianism: Essays in Honour of Marjorie Reeves*, ed. A. Williams (Harlow, 1980), pp. 57–75.

Furthermore, Joachim himself has been understood as subscribing to a fundamentally orthodox pessimism: no age of human history can achieve true perfection, although certainly he understood victory against Antichrist to herald an age of spiritual illumination, within the third status. There was no Angelic Pope, and no Last World Emperor, in Joachim's original schema – for him, the Roman empire was New Babylon, the oppressor of the Church.²⁰ This discursive gap, between Joachim and Joachite, is a profound one, and the tense relationship between spiritual and secular authority is one that is at the very heart of the later Joachite tradition, which while it lauded some kings as Last World Emperors, denounced others as Antichrists, or princes of New Babylon.

The integration of political sibylline elements in Joachite thought represents more than, as Reeves has termed it, a 'vulgarisation' of Joachim's schema.²¹ It directed spiritual expectations through political channels. It was associated not only with apprehension of the End Times, but the direct role to be played by political actors in the course of the Last Things. Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Joachite expectations for *renovatio* were invested in secular political actors from across Europe, from the imperial prophetic hopes Dante pinned on Henry VII of Luxemburg to the German, and later French, prophecies of the Second Charlemagne.²²

One of the most important innovators in the development of this theme was John of Rupescissa (Jean de Roquetaillade).²³ A Minorite and a Joachite, John was deeply influenced by the Spiritual Franciscans' calls for Church reform. His visions brought him into conflict with ecclesiastical authorities, and he spent the greater part of his career imprisoned in Franciscan monasteries, and later in the papal prison at Avignon. His prophetic writings appear in numerous English prophetic collections and chronicles of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.²⁴ His most popular work in England was his *Vade mecum in tribulacione* ('Go with me in tribulation', c. 1356), which, following a retrospective prophecy of recent French military defeats and the spread of plague, prophesied ecclesiastical renewal and the reconquest of the Holy Land at the hands of an Angelic Pope and the king of France. This is placed contemporane-

²⁰ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, p. 304.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 320–31.

²³ See *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*, ed. B. McGinn (New York, 1979), pp. 230–3; Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 321–4.

²⁴ In addition to the discussion of John Erghome's library, below, see Nissé, 'Prophetic Nations'. Nissé notes the incorporation of *Vade mecum* in the *Eulogium*. See also Kerby-Fulton, *Books under Suspicion*, p. 60.

ously with the emergence in the east of the first of two Antichrists. We read that, contrary to the custom of German elections, the reforming pope declares the French king the Holy Roman emperor. This king is a quasi-messianic figure (certainly, a Last World Emperor), who will be 'of such sanctity that no emperor or king from the beginning of the world is his equal in sanctity, save the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, our Lord Jesus Christ'.²⁵ The pair reconcile divisions in the Church, suppress Islam and build an empire extending as far as Asia.

For John, these events were imminent: he dated the beginning of Joachim's third status to 1400 and believed himself to live on the edge of an age of Antichrists and saviour kings.²⁶ It is presumably for its claim to tell of recent and near-future events that this material enjoyed such prolific English circulation during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, particularly given its overtly French political agenda.²⁷ In the years immediately following the deposition of Richard II, the accidental congruence of the date of John's vision with a traumatic age in English political history, itself populated by royal heroes and villains, may well have had a profound effect upon the English Franciscans.

Down to the seventeenth century, Joachite works circulated across Europe, articulating ambitions for not only ecclesiastical reform, but direct political intervention. It is in this respect that we might understand the allusion to Richard by the Aylesbury friar as his 'amicus', a term conventionally used to refer to members of the same monastic order. We might wonder if Richard were understood to have a particular place in the Franciscan mission, allied to a Joachite eschatological vision. Notably, the same friar claimed to 'rejoice' in Richard – a curious turn of phrase that recalls 1 Kings 2 (KJV 1 Samuel 2), 'Exultavit cor meum in Domino' ('My heart has rejoiced in the Lord'), a phrase with particular applicability at Easter. The return rumour saw a revival, and Richard's return was first prophesied, in the spring (of 1402). From the very earliest Joachite texts, including the writings of Joachim himself, *renovatio* is understood in relation to this season. Indeed, in later Joachite thought the third status is figured as a final Pentecost,²⁸ and the Easter-Pentecost period is freighted with significance in Joachim's schema.²⁹ In the Aylesbury friar's attitudes towards Richard, we may well discern

²⁵ John of Rupescissa, *Vade mecum in tribulacione* (extract, in English translation), in *Visions*, ed. McGinn, p. 232.

²⁶ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, p. 228.

²⁷ A similar observation is made by Nissé, 'Prophetic Nations', p. 97.

²⁸ Reeves, 'Originality and Influence', p. 270.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

the vision of a saviour king and the beginning of the third status of history.

Political Joachimism presented not only a possible overture to good rulers, but a mechanism for the critique of bad. In many respects the latter was by far the earlier movement, deeply rooted in Joachite literary history. For Joachim, New Babylon was not a corrupt papacy, but the Roman Empire, which in at least one of his texts he understood to be the oppressor of the Church (although we might observe, with Reeves, that for Joachim, Antichrist – the worst tyrant – was not a western but an eastern leader). We have already noted that in *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, Joachim identified the dragon's fifth head as the emperor Henry IV.³⁰ Certainly, the danger of *imperium* was a preconception of the early generation of political Joachite authors. One of the best examples of this is found in an Italian Joachite production of the 1240s, the *Super Hieremiam* ('Upon Jeremiah'), allegedly a letter from Joachim to the emperor Henry VI concerning the Hohenstaufen line, which takes its cue from *Expositio*. The text prophesied three afflictions for the Church prior to the commencement of the third status: the infidel, the heretic and German *imperium*. These were the tribulations of Antichrist, which would be followed by the arrival of an Angelic Pope who would rejuvenate the Church, bring about universal conversion, and usher in the third status.³¹

The myth of the imperial Antichrist was a useful and a long-lived one for many Joachite authors, applied with particular enthusiasm to the Hohenstaufens – or, as they came to appear in prophetic texts, the line of Frederick.³² The campaign was widespread and effective: it inspired a number of German counter-productions, which cast a Hohenstaufen emperor as the reformer of a depraved Church.³³ The tyrannies of the English king Henry IV, may well have presented one such manifestation for the English friars: part of the crescendo of evil that preceded the third status and (in the case of Richard) the arrival of a saviour king (rather than an Angelic Pope). The text of *Super Hieremiam* was in English Franciscan circulation during the late fourteenth century. It appears alongside a number of Joachite tracts in London, British Library (BL), MS Additional 11439, where it is glossed with a number of pictorial annotations in a loose imitation of Joachim's own *figurae*. A compilation of Joachite materials probably intended for

³⁰ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, p. 305.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 306; an extract from *Super Hieremiam*, in English translation, is printed in *Visions*, ed. McGinn, pp. 176–7.

³² See discussion of 'Gallorum levitas', pp. 142–3 below.

³³ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 310–11.

personal consultation, the collection has been understood as the work of a Minorite.³⁴

As Kathryn Kerby-Fulton has pointed out, we still await a full study of the extent of European apocalyptic texts in circulation in England, but English acquaintance with Joachite prophecy – first and foremost within monastic milieux – has been well noted by a number of scholars.³⁵ Although there was no significant Spiritual Franciscan presence in Britain, English monasteries were certainly not cut off from broader European Joachism.³⁶ Joachite material saw early circulation in England in the writings of monastic chroniclers and in the disputations and reading materials of Oxford luminaries such as Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon, figures with strong links to the Franciscan order.³⁷ Excerpts from Joachim's writings pertaining to the arrival of Antichrist and a coming time of hardship were addressed to Grosseteste and appear to have been also known to Bacon.³⁸ We can also note the continued prevalence of Joachite material among the Franciscan community at Oxford. The library catalogue of the Franciscan house at Oxford records copies of a number of early Joachite texts.³⁹ In this respect, it is worth remembering that Frisby was an Oxford 'magister' and made Oxford the centre of his projected campaign on Richard's behalf – his own brand of Franciscan militarism.

Joachite material survives, however, from across England, and one of the best preserved collections is found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 404, compiled at the Benedictine abbey of Bury St Edmunds in the second half of the fourteenth century by the abbey's librarian Henry of Kirkstede. It was put together from material circulating at monasteries across East Anglia and is suggestive of the extent of the late fourteenth-century English circulation of Joachite prophecies. Most notable among the collection are a number of prophecies, ascribed

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 81–2.

³⁵ Bloomfield and Reeves, 'Penetration of Joachism'; Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, esp. pp. 81–3; B. Smalley, *Studies in Medieval Thought and Learning: From Abelard to Wyclif* (London, 1981), pp. 205–48; Bloomfield, *Plowman*, Appendix 1; K. Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist Apocalypticism and Piers Plowman* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 23–5. See further, K. Kerby-Fulton, 'English Joachimism and its Codicological Content, with a List of Known Joachite Manuscripts of English Origin or Provenance before 1600', in *Joachim of Fiore and the Influence of Inspiration: Essays in Memory of Marjorie Reeves*, ed. J. Wannenmacher (Aldershot, 2013), pp. 183–230; Kerby-Fulton, *Books under Suspicion*, pp. 88–95.

³⁶ Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist Apocalypticism*, p. 163.

³⁷ Reeves and Bloomfield, 'Penetration of Joachism', pp. 785–6.

³⁸ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 46–8; A. Power, *Roger Bacon and the Defence of Christendom* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 199–200.

³⁹ Bloomfield, *Plowman*, Appendix 1.

pseudonymously to Joachim, concerning the arrival of Antichrist, and a pictorial sequence which requires further study but appears to have some relationship to the Joachite *Vaticinia pontificum* ('Prophecy of the popes'), discussed further below. The manuscript also contains a number of sibylline texts of the Last World Emperor type.⁴⁰

We might also consider roughly contemporary evidence that survives from among the Augustinians at York in the library of John Erghome, a fourteenth-century canon of Bridlington associated with the powerful Bohun family. Erghome is an important figure in the history of English political prophecy, and his personal library, bequeathed to the house at York, boasts a wealth of Joachite political prophetic texts, including extracts from John of Rupescissa.⁴¹ Erghome was an enthusiastic reader, if not indeed the author, of one of the most famous English prophecies of the later Middle Ages: the *Prophecies of John of Bridlington* (c. 1362–4).⁴² An originally anonymous series of prophecies, initially associated with 'Robert the scribe' of Bridlington Priory in north Yorkshire and later ascribed to John Thwenge, the sainted John of Bridlington, *Bridlington* details events of the reign of Edward III with some limited futurist material, accompanied by a commentary ascribed to Erghome. It combines a lament for the times with ambitions for the English reconquest of France, and even a new crusade. It has been understood to incorporate elements of Joachite influence.⁴³ Although none of these motifs is fully developed, it does offer an interesting case study of the reception of Joachite materials by a late medieval monastic author.

The *Bridlington* author makes use of a stock motif in Latin apocalypticism: the coming of a new David, a messianic ruler who will reconquer

⁴⁰ M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1911), II, 269–77. Discussed by R. E. Lerner, *Powers of Prophecy: The Cedar of Lebanon Vision from the Mongol Onslaught to the Dawn of the Enlightenment* (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 93–101; Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 93–4; Kerby-Fulton, 'English Joachimism and its Codiological Context', p. 210.

⁴¹ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 255–6.

⁴² T. Wright, *Political Poems and Songs relating to English History, Composed during the Period from the Accession of Edward III to that of Richard III*, 2 vols. (London, 1859–61), I, 123–215; M. Curley, 'The Prophecy of John of Bridlington: An Edition' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1973); H. M. Peck, 'The Prophecy of St John of Bridlington' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1930); P. Meyvaert, 'John Erghome and the *Vaticinium Roberti Bridlington*', *Speculum* 61 (1966), 656–64; M. J. Curley, 'The Cloak of Anonymity and the *Prophecy of John of Bridlington*', *Modern Philology* 77 (1980), 361–9; A. G. Rigg, 'John of Bridlington's Prophecy: A New Look', *Speculum* 63 (1988), 596–613; Taylor, *Political Prophecy*, pp. 51–8; Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs*, pp. 118–19, 121–8.

⁴³ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, p. 256.

Jerusalem. This is a political reapplication of originally spiritual meanings found in Joachim's own writings. Joachim associated David, understood in a priestly rather than imperial capacity, with the time of a third Jerusalem, marking the entry into the third spiritual status of history.⁴⁴ The motif appears in later Joachite works, such as John of Rupescissa's *Vade mecum*, which contains an allusion to a reforming 'David futurus'; and Arnold of Villanova's *Tractatus de mysterio cymbalorum ecclesiae* ('Treatise on the mystery of the cymbals of the Church') – a controversial text widely read in England which sparked debate about the orthodoxy of calculating the date of the coming of Antichrist – where a new David restores Christian possessions in Palestine.⁴⁵ In *Bridlington*, David is one of the names applied to Edward III, although this was certainly not entirely laudatory. The commentary laments Edward's sinful proclivities, associating them with David's lust for Bathsheba – and attributes a turn in English fortunes in France for the worse to divine punishment for the king's sexual profligacy.⁴⁶ This is almost certainly a politicized subversion of a broadly positive Joachite cipher.⁴⁷ Although *Bridlington* belongs to a period of some disillusionment in Edward and his French wars, from the earliest days of his reign Edward was associated with imperial or Last World Emperor prophecy, a jingoist tradition inspired by his early successes in France which prompted prophetically-minded authors to look across the continent to Jerusalem.⁴⁸

We might also note the prominent use in *Bridlington* of a bull cipher, also in application to Edward, identified as one and the same as David. This has a claim to an origin in an originally Byzantine text, generally ascribed to Leo the Wise, and known to scholars as the *Oracles of Leo*.⁴⁹ Although it has been suggested that the *Oracles* were not originally intended to possess apocalyptic meanings, they came to be read in such a way, and the sequence circulated across Europe from the early Middle Ages to the seventeenth century as an apocalyptic tract. It prophesies

⁴⁴ Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist Apocalypticism*, pp. 180–1; Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, p. 304.

⁴⁵ Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist Apocalypticism*, pp. 182–3; Daniel, *Franciscan Concept*, p. 92; Lerner, *Powers of Prophecy*, p. 40.

⁴⁶ Wright, *Political Poems*, I, 159, 166; discussed by Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs*, p. 126.

⁴⁷ We might note that we find a similar allusion to David as a reforming king in the *Piers Plowman* B-text. This has been understood in relation to Joachite source traditions by Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist Apocalypticism*, pp. 180–1.

⁴⁸ This is discussed in detail in V. Flood, 'Wynne and Wastoure and the Influence of Political Prophecy', *Chaucer Review* 49 (2015), 427–48.

⁴⁹ C. Mango, 'The Legend of Leo the Wise', *Extrait du Recueil des travaux de l'Institut d'études byzantines* 6 (1960), 59–93.

a series of emperors ruling from Constantinople, accompanied by a sequence of illustrations. This features a 'bull-like emperor' (the fifth in the sequence), whose reign will be happy. The bull was the object of positive association, cultivated by a number of prophetically-minded Byzantine rulers. By the last quarter of the thirteenth century at the latest, material from the prophecy was in circulation in western Europe, in Latin, as the *Vaticinia pontificum*, ascribed pseudonymously to Joachim of Fiore – where the sequence was adapted to refer to a succession of popes.⁵⁰ The *Vaticinia* had a particular circulation among the *fraticelli*, where it saw subsequent revisions.⁵¹ Although a full study of the different variants of the *Vaticinia* and *Oracles* and the precise extent of their circulation is needed, the *Vaticinia* certainly appears in a number of English monastic manuscripts and is among the texts in the catalogue of John Erghome's private library.⁵² The use of the bull in *Bridlington* represents a distinctively English political take on an imperial theme. The bull possesses a triple nature – of English, British and French descent, an allusion to the heritage of Edward III, a king with a French mother, a father (Edward II) born in Caernarfon, and himself born in Windsor. This meaning is made explicit in the commentary which accompanies it in *Bridlington*.⁵³ It is an imperial cipher, appropriated and adapted with a specifically English imperialism in mind: endorsing the English king's conquest of Britain and France.

It has been suggested that the fullest realizations of political Joachite optimism found in *Bridlington* are those which refer to an age of future glory to begin under the Black Prince.⁵⁴ We read of Edward of Woodstock as the 'gallus', the cock. This is a play on the word for 'Frenchman' conventionally used in Latin political prophecies produced in England (similarly, 'gallus'). It frames a claim to the French throne and was originally associated with Edward III, as we read in the *Bridlington* commentary. This new 'gallus' gathers his chicks about him and launches an attack on France.⁵⁵ It is a prophecy of continental conquest. It saw considerable use in the early fifteenth century and was reworked in a vernacular prophecy, *Cock in the North*, employed by followers of the Percy family who first rebelled against Henry in 1403, as a statement of opposition to the Lancastrian regime.⁵⁶ Importantly, *Cock in the North*

⁵⁰ Mango, 'Legend of Leo the Wise', p. 62.

⁵¹ N. Havely, *Dante and the Franciscans: Poverty and the Papacy in the Commedia* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 181–2.

⁵² Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, p. 255.

⁵³ Wright, *Political Poems*, I, 192–4.

⁵⁴ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, p. 256.

⁵⁵ Wright, *Political Poems*, I, 203–4.

⁵⁶ For printed versions of the text, see A. Brandl, 'The Cock in the North: Poetische

takes as its central allusion the figure of a dead man who returns to seek vengeance against his enemies and ends his days in Palestine after winning the Holy Cross (a figure for the restoration of Christian rule and universal conversion, and a staple of Last World Emperor prophecy):⁵⁷

In Surrey shall be shewid a wonderfull sight *Palestine*
In the cite of Babilon to bryng hem on bere *bier*
xv dayes journey from Jerusalem
The holy crossse shall be

In its immediate political-historical application, this must be understood as the returning Richard II, cast as a Last World Emperor. It circulated contemporaneously with, and was undoubtedly born from, the cultural context of the return rumour.

The utility of material from *Bridlington* in prophetic treatments of the return rumour was almost certainly derived from a prior association of this material with Richard II. The Cheshire author of the Ricardian portion of the *Dieulacres Chronicle* (London, Gray's Inn Library, MS 9), writing in the early fifteenth century, recalled prophecies taken directly from *Bridlington* and associated with Richard's nativity.⁵⁸ This is unsurprising, given the earlier application of this material to his father and grandfather. Richard is identified by ciphers associated with Edward III and the Black Prince. Like Edward III, he is a bull of triple nature. He is also identified as the 'gallus', the greatest hero in the world. This material circulated at the highest political level: Thomas Walsingham records the application of these particular prophecies to Richard II in 1399, by false flatterers at the English court.⁵⁹

Prophetic material in circulation at *Bridlington* was known to Frisby, who, the *Eulogium* author records, confessed that his expectations were in part rooted in a prophecy by a canon of *Bridlington*.⁶⁰ Given the

Weissagung auf Percy Hotspur (gest. 1403)', *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 47 (1909), 1160–89; R. H. Robbins, ed., *Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries* (New York, 1959), pp. 115–17, 309–12. For discussion of the use of the prophecy by Percy partisans, see Flood, *Prophecy, Politics and Place*, ch. 4.

⁵⁷ Cf. [*Prophecy of*] *Pseudo-Methodius* (extracts, in English translation), in McGinn, *Visions*, p. 76.

⁵⁸ London, Gray's Inn Library, MS 9, fol. 142v. For discussion of the chronicle and its component parts, see M. V. Clarke and V. H. Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 14 (1930), 125–81 (pp. 126–31). See also A. Horwood, *Catalogue of the Ancient Manuscripts Belonging to the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn* (London, 1869), pp. 7–9.

⁵⁹ *The St Albans Chronicle: The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham II: 1394–1422*, ed. and trans. J. Taylor, W. R. Childs and L. Watkiss (Oxford, 2011), pp. 124–5.

⁶⁰ *Eulogium*, III, 391.

contemporary association of *Bridlington* with Richard II, and its intersection with Joachite materials, Frisby's acquaintance with the prophecy in his engagement with the matter of Richard's return presents a very strong hypothesis indeed. In his study of the friars' testimonies, Whitfield suggested precisely this, and he has been followed by more recent scholars.⁶¹ However, we might also understand this admission in relation to the wealth of prophecies in circulation at Bridlington, beyond this one text (which itself is a synthesis of many). It is also possible that Frisby's allusion to Bridlington tells us not only of his acquaintance with the *Prophecies of John of Bridlington*, but also about a broad monastic network through which European Joachite prophecy circulated across the English orders and inspired new productions. Notably, Frisby was executed alongside an Augustinian prior, and there appears to have been some level of Augustinian sympathy for Franciscan opposition to Henry during this period. It is well recognized that there was a high level of clerical involvement in opposition to Henry more generally.⁶² *Bridlington* was just one prophecy among many that may have come to Frisby through an Augustinian connection.⁶³

There are a number of individual texts with Joachite origins in English circulation during this period which we can tie far less decisively to any particular library or order and which appear to have been, in manuscript terms, the property of all. One of the most prolific Joachite productions, which survives in a wealth of English manuscripts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, is an originally mid-thirteenth century Ghibelline prophecy beginning 'Gallorum levitas'.⁶⁴ It envisages a Hohenstaufen champion who will reform a corrupt papacy, restoring it to apostolic purity. The prophecy saw wide circulation across Europe and was interpreted in line with a number of different political and national agendas. It was even turned to anti-Hohenstaufen uses in Italy, where after 1268 a second verse was added to the prophecy forecasting the arrival of a second hero who will support the papacy and destroy the 'tribe' of Frederick (the Hohenstaufen line).⁶⁵ In England, the text circulated in

⁶¹ Whitfield, 'Conflicts of Personality', p. 333, n. 46; Curley, 'Cloak of Anonymity', p. 361; Kerby-Fulton, *Books under Suspicion*, p. 213. For closely contemporary applications of *Bridlington* to political affairs, see Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*, p. 12.

⁶² R. A. Griffiths, 'Some Secret Supporters of Owain Glyn Dŵr', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 37 (1964), 77–100 (p. 85).

⁶³ For a brief survey of the prophecies in circulation among the Augustinian friars, see Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 251–73.

⁶⁴ The English circulation of this is discussed further by Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs*, pp. 75–6; Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist Apocalypticism*, p. 177.

⁶⁵ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, p. 312.

its pro-Hohenstaufen form from the reign of Edward II onwards and is found in monastic libraries from across England. Part of its appeal was almost certainly its anti-French bias: it begins with a vision of the defeat of the cock of Gaul by the imperial eagle. It was by no means received as a specifically Franciscan text, although its interests are in keeping with the Spiritual Franciscan charge for papal disendowment. The prophecy concludes,

Constantine cades et equi de marmore facti
Et lapis erectus et multa palacia Rome
Papa cito moritur cesar regnabit ubique
Sub quo tunc vana cessabit gloria cleri

‘Constantine, you will be destroyed, and horses made of marble
And high stone and many palaces of Rome.
Before long the Pope will die and Caesar will reign everywhere
Under whom then the vainglory of the clergy will cease.’⁶⁶

This is an allusion to the donation of Constantine, which was for the Franciscans, like many other groups urging reform, the first historical movement away from the apostolic poverty of the early Church. This is a remarkably strong prophecy for an English collection – generally so orthodox – and yet we find it in a number of monastic manuscripts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The text as I quote it here is from BL, MS Arundel 57 (c. 1340), compiled at the Benedictine abbey at Canterbury, where it finds illuminating company. The prophecy appears in a sequence termed by J. R. S. Phillips the ‘Verses of Gildas Concerning the Prophecy of the Eagle and the Hermit’ (fols 4v–5r), accompanied by a commentary (fols 5v–8v) interpreting the prophecy as an account of the future conquests of Edward II (its original date of composition is assumed to be 1318–19).⁶⁷ ‘Gallorum levitas’ is the third prophecy in a sequence concerned with the glories not of the Holy Roman emperor but of the king of England. Read as a whole, the sequence forecasts an English king’s conquest of Scotland and Ireland, a campaign across Europe, during which time he will also conquer France and restore the Holy Land to Christian rule. He is then crowned Emperor of the World by the pope, and ‘Gallorum levitas’ follows.

The second component prophecy in the ‘Verses of Gildas’, similarly concerned with far-reaching military campaigns, is an English

⁶⁶ BL, Arundel MS 57, fol. 5v. My transcription and translation.

⁶⁷ J. R. S. Phillips, ‘Edward II and the Prophets’, in *England in the Fourteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1985 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. W. M. Ormrod (Woodbridge, 1986), pp. 189–201 (pp. 194–5).

composition exhibiting considerable anti-French sentiment, beginning 'Anglia transmittet'. This is a vision of the English king's conquest of France, successes in Palestine and ecclesiastical reform of a corrupt Church, which appears here as New Babylon, a conventional cipher in Joachite prophecy for the decadence of the contemporary Church, although Joachim himself applied the term to the Empire.⁶⁸ Although offering a vision of an earthly empire, the text also contains an in-built tonic to the danger of *imperium* – a particular sticking-point in Joachite thought – for, after ushering in this *renovatio* (here ecclesiastical reform and the reconquest of Jerusalem and Acre), the king renounces his imperial authority in favour of a hermit ('eremita'), presumably an Angelic Pope. For some English monastic readers, the saviour-king of political Joachism was the king of England, and the reform of the Church the natural extension of the realization of imperial ambitions in Britain, Ireland and France.

This kind of prophetic material is understood to have been applied to Richard II during the final years of his reign. It is even believed to have influenced his behaviour in his ill-timed attempt to conquer Ireland in 1399 (during which Henry seized the throne).⁶⁹ Michael Bennett suggests that in his very conception of the campaign, Richard may have been inspired by an acquaintance with material of a type with the 'Verses of Gildas', specifically the notion of an Irish victory as precursory to the successful undertaking of a crusade.⁷⁰ Richard's flirtation with imperial ambitions is well noted in relation to a much written-about prophecy known as the 'Holy Oil of St Thomas', originally applied to Edward II.⁷¹ The legend surrounding the prophecy concerns the gift of an eagle *ampoule* by the Virgin Mary to St Thomas Becket, which was to anoint a king who would conquer Europe and Jerusalem. The prophecy exists in a number of texts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The earli-

⁶⁸ Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist Apocalypticism*, p. 188. See also Taylor, *Political Prophecy*, pp. 56–7. For a discussion of the prophecy and its place in the *Eulogium*, see also Nissé, 'Prophetic Nations', pp. 100–1, referring to *Eulogium*, I, 420.

⁶⁹ M. J. Bennett, 'Richard II and the Wider Realm', in *Richard II: The Art of Kingship*, ed. A. Goodman and J. Gillespie (Oxford, 1999), pp. 187–204 (pp. 202–3); Fulton, 'Arthurian Prophecy', p. 72.

⁷⁰ Bennett, 'Richard II and the Wider Realm', p. 202.

⁷¹ Phillips, 'Edward II and the Prophets', pp. 196–201; W. Ullmann, 'Thomas Becket's Miraculous Oil', *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 8 (1957), 129–33; J. W. McKenna, 'The Coronation Oil of the Yorkist Kings', *EHR* 82 (1967), 102–4; T. A. Sandquist, 'The Holy Oil of St Thomas of Canterbury', in *Essays in Medieval History Presented to Bertie Wilkinson*, ed. T. A. Sandquist and M. R. Powicke (Toronto, 1969), pp. 330–44; C. Lloyd-Morgan, 'Prophecy and Welsh Nationhood in the Fifteenth Century', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1985), 9–26. The latter details the fifteenth-century Welsh translation and adaptation of the text.

est reference to it is found in the papal letters of an English Dominican formerly in the service of the dukes of Brabant (the origin of the legend itself is probably German) during the reign of Edward II. The legend appears to have been actively manipulated by Richard II, who took the oil with him on his ill-fated Irish campaign.

Richard was not alone in dreaming imperial dreams. A crusading promise is perceptible behind the address to the king by Philippe de Mézières, a diplomat from the French court negotiating Richard II's French marriage in 1395.⁷² Philippe hailed Richard, if the French alliance were to be fulfilled, as one of the leaders of a successful future crusade, conquering the earthly, and earning the heavenly, Jerusalem. The terms of this flattery were almost certainly indebted to a movement in the late 1380s to elect Richard as the Holy Roman emperor (his first wife was Anne of Bohemia, daughter of Emperor Charles IV). These ambitions very feasibly came to the attention of members of the Franciscan order in England. After all, the Franciscans maintained a presence in Jerusalem for centuries past the capture of Acre in 1291. In many respects, Franciscan political Joachism was as interested in the reconquest of the Holy Land as it was in Church reform – the two go hand in hand in Joachite political prophecy.

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw a vogue in England for the combining of material previously concerned with British and Irish conquests with visions of Church reform. During this period, we do not see simply the reception of continental Joachite prophecies, but the composition of new ones, centring on a reforming figure not found in any Italian, French or German source, but in the oldest work of English political prophecy: Geoffrey of Monmouth's 'Prophetiae Merlini' (c. 1138), which survives as Book VII of his history of the legendary British past, the *Historia regum Britanniae*.⁷³ Among the many figures of Geoffrey's text is an imperial hero identified as 'Sextus', the sixth. This is a British high king who, after a troubled youth, conquers Ireland, unites its five provinces and restores the holy places of the saints ('Prophetiae', 99–100). Sextus had a long life in insular prophecy. In Latin prophecies produced in England during the fourteenth century, this friend of the Church came to be associated with the reforming king of the Joachite tradition. Notably, in one fourteenth-century English manuscript, Cambridge, St John's College, MS G. 16, a collection of historical and prophetic materials, 'Gallorum levitas' is incorporated in Geoffrey's

⁷² Philippe de Mézières, *Letter to Richard II*, ed. and trans. G. W. Copeland (Liverpool, 1975); Fulton, 'Arthurian Prophecy', pp. 69–70.

⁷³ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, ed. M. D. Reeve, trans. N. Wright (Woodbridge, 2007).

Historia as the first in a number of prophecies ascribed to Merlin (fols 43r–44r).⁷⁴ Joachite material was understood as a counterpart to earlier insular prophecies. We might note similarly the presence of Galfridian material alongside the Joachite and the sibylline in MS Corpus Christi 404, discussed above.

One of the most important examples of the conflation of the Joachite with the Galfridian is another prophecy found in Latin monastic manuscripts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, beginning ‘Ter tria lustra’, which was also inserted, with extensive glossing, in the *Eulogium historiarum*.⁷⁵ Here Sextus conquers the world before restoring apostolic poverty and renewing the Church: ‘Orbem subvertet, reliquo clerumque reducet ad statum primum’ (‘He will conquer the world, he will lead the clergy back to the first state’).⁷⁶ Interestingly, this prophecy had a long Franciscan association – additional verses found in some copies were spuriously attributed to Grosseteste.⁷⁷ Like ‘Gallorum levitas’, the prophecy draws on the political interests and vocabulary of the Spiritual Franciscans, but unlike the former it was composed not in Germany or Italy but in England. The prophecy, like the English uses of ‘Gallorum levitas’ and its companion prophecy ‘Anglia transmittet’, represents a distinctively English appropriation and reworking of a continental Joachite framework.

The context of Franciscan opposition

Active Franciscan involvement in opposition to the early Lancastrian regime is well attested in official documents and chronicles from the early fifteenth century, and it was rumoured that the Franciscans were funnelling money to Henry IV’s opponents in Wales, led by the gentry leader, Owain Glyn Dŵr (a charge mentioned in the *Eulogium* and the later account of the same events in the text known as Davies’s *Chronicle*).⁷⁸ The Lancastrian government appears to have strongly associated anti-Lancastrian activity in Wales with anti-Lancastrian fervour among the Franciscans. Although, as Peter McNiven has suggested, this may have been part of a broader strategy to justify a decisive response to malcontents in England, equated with the Welsh rebels, there was

⁷⁴ M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of St John’s College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1913), pp. 217–22.

⁷⁵ *Eulogium*, I, 417. Briefly discussed by Nissé, ‘Prophetic Nations’, p. 100.

⁷⁶ Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs*, pp. 74–5, Coote’s transcription, my translation.

⁷⁷ Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist Apocalypticism*, p. 187; Bloomfield, *Plowman*, p. 215.

⁷⁸ *Eulogium*, III, 392–3; *English Chronicle*, ed. Davies, p. 26.

certainly some connection between the two.⁷⁹ There is no reason to discount the likelihood of some genuine measure of support among the English Franciscans for the Welsh rebellion, or to distrust accounts such as those of Adam of Usk, who noted the execution of eleven Franciscans in London as confederates of Owain Glyn Dŵr.⁸⁰ Notably, friars from the northern Welsh monastery at Llanfaes were involved in armed resistance to Henry in Anglesey in 1401.⁸¹ In respect of this, the claims of their English brothers in the testimonies of 1402 to fight alongside Richard do not seem so far-fetched. Although it has been well noted that we do not see the same heretical or fraternal tradition of Joachism in England as elsewhere in Europe – and Kerby-Fulton has observed that we certainly do not find the militant apocalypticism of Italy or Germany – there was a strong streak of militarism to the friars' engagements with the return legend.⁸² Yet in itself this was actually indicative of a broader conservatism. For the most part, English apocalyptic prophecy envisaged renewal through the means of existing authorities, rather than their destruction. It has been suggested by scholars of English opposition to Henry IV more broadly that a similar political conservatism stood behind the persistent use of Richard's name against Henry among his many opponents, including the friars.⁸³

One of the better-noted political uses of the return legend – outside its Franciscan uses, although standing as an illuminating comparison to them – is its employment by the Percy family in their mobilization of opposition to Henry in Cheshire in 1403. A number of contemporary chroniclers record the dissemination of a rumour of Richard's return by the faction led by Henry Percy *le filz*, also known as Hotspur.⁸⁴ Hotspur

⁷⁹ McNiven, 'Rebellion, Sedition', p. 103. For a brief discussion of the various rumours associating the Franciscans with the Welsh rebellion, including the sensationalist claim that the friars practised necromancy on Owain's behalf, see Whitfield, 'Conflicts of Personality', p. 332.

⁸⁰ McNiven, 'Rebellion, Sedition', p. 101.

⁸¹ *Eulogium*, III, 388; Whitfield, 'Conflicts of Personality', p. 338.

⁸² Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist Apocalypticism*, p. 163. The most compelling study of militant millenarianism remains N. Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages*, 2nd (revised and expanded) edn. (London, 1970; cited here from rpt., 2004), although it has been suggested that Cohn overstated his case: see R. E. Lerner, 'The Black Death and Western European Eschatological Mentalities', *American Historical Review* 86 (1981), 533–52.

⁸³ See above n. 1.

⁸⁴ *St Albans Chronicle II*, ed. Taylor *et al.* pp. 362–3; L. D. Duls, *Richard II in the Early Chronicles* (Paris, 1975), p. 195; Clarke and Galbraith, 'Deposition of Richard II', pp. 177–8. See also Duls, *Richard II in the Early Chronicles*, p. 196; McNiven, 'Rebellion, Sedition', p. 104.

maintained that Richard would appear in the Delamere forest with an army marshalled by the earl of Northumberland, and crowds flocked to Hotspur in the expectation of seeing the king. Functionally, this use of the return rumour is very similar in its employment to Frisby's attempts to mobilize a fighting force in support of the returning king at Oxford in 1402. The comparison between the two can tell us something about the hold of the rumour – its success was attendant on certain preconditions, including a broad communal willingness to entertain the possibility of the king's survival. The success of the return legend rests on a particular set of cultural and political assumptions broadly shared among a particular community. In Cheshire, this was rooted in the historical favours of the king to the men of this region. For the English Franciscans, I suggest, the foundation of its appeal lay in Joachite, and related, prophecy.

The Franciscans were invested in Richard not just as any king of England, but as a king of England carrying a pre-existing association with a strand of apocalyptic prophecy. What is more, this was an eschatological schema that also had a place for Henry as part of the rising wave of corruption that would precede the saviour king, a force that the new order of spiritual men had a divine obligation to challenge. In his dialogue with Henry, Frisby exhibits a strong sense of the difference between true and false authorities – between rightful kings and illegal usurpers. This perception is at one with a prophetic discourse concerned with saviour kings and tyrants. Among the English Franciscans, Richard's cause assumed a spiritual dimension associated with a particular type of lay piety. The 1402 charges against Frisby and his brothers included that of preaching that Richard was alive in Scotland or alternatively might be sought in Wales – and the activity of seeking him might itself serve as an act of penance.⁸⁵ To seek Richard, and to resist Henry, was an undertaking that was as spiritual as it was political. The discovery of Richard and the unseating of Henry became a moral imperative for all the faithful.

Conclusion

The account in the *Eulogium historiarum* can provide little more than the trace of a prophetic movement, an anecdote decontextualized from the fuller culture of prophetically motivated anti-Lancastrianism to which it properly belongs. This chapter has been an early attempt, in what

⁸⁵ *Eulogium*, III, 392–3; *English Chronicle*, ed. Davies, p. 26.

necessarily must be a much larger study into English apocalypticism, to reconstruct that culture. Franciscan prophecies were part of an oppositional culture, functioning not just as expressions of discontent but as a threat of genuine violence. This impulse was fuelled, I suggest, by a long textual tradition, with its beginning in southern Italy and its end in the friaries of the English Midlands. Joachite prophecies were a vital part of monastic manuscript culture, with particular pertinence for Franciscan self-representation: that is, the order's concept of its mission as part of a new class of spiritual men. This offered an important point of intersection with Joachite and sibylline traditions associated with the kings of England, in place from as early as the reigns of Edward II and III, even possibly from the reign of Richard I, and which was widely associated with Richard II during his lifetime. It is possible that, prior to 1399, the English Franciscans invested greater hopes in Richard and his imperial potential than has been previously imagined; however, it is clear that the circumstances of his deposition and a perception of Henry's tyranny, itself potentially conceptualized in line with a long tradition of Joachite opposition to secular tyrants, inspired fresh engagement with Joachite prophecy and its decidedly contemporary political application. As Whitfield has suggested, Franciscan opposition to Henry appears to have largely been a 'matter of conscience',⁸⁶ but it was a conscience that was pricked by the apocalyptic imaginings of political prophecy.

⁸⁶ Whitfield, 'Conflicts of Personality', p. 335.

Urban History in Medieval and Early Modern Britain: The Influence of Classical and Italian Models

Helen Fulton

Relatively little has been written about urban history as a medieval genre in Britain, mainly because there are few examples of chronological histories of individual towns in Britain before the late seventeenth century. This chapter makes a new contribution to medieval urban historiography by proposing a redefinition of what urban history was and what forms it took in medieval Britain, and by arguing that there has in fact been a continuous, if diverse, tradition of urban history from Bede to the modern period. In presenting the evidence for a continuous tradition, the chapter takes a new look at the influence of classical and Italian urban historical genres on British writing, particularly the genre of chorography, which is repositioned here as a form of urban history.

By 'urban history' I mean a diachronic historical survey of a town or city over a period of time – not simply synchronic studies of a town or aspects of urban life at particular historical moments. As a modern genre, the diachronic type of urban history in the form of civic or municipal histories of individual towns and cities is essentially an eighteenth-century phenomenon in Britain.¹ The emergence of chronological histories of British towns can be linked to a move towards increased autonomy in urban governance, the growth of commerce and trade and the development of distinctive civic identities in the larger towns. With the growth of tourism, urban histories were commodified to appeal both to the citizens of the town and to the outsiders who might choose to visit it. From the twentieth century, urban history has been absorbed into, or rather overshadowed by, a wider field of urban studies which concerns itself particularly with economics, planning, population growth, demographics and geographies of urban space.² Yet urban history, as distinct

¹ The growth of urban histories in this period has been comprehensively surveyed by R. Sweet, *The Writing of Urban Histories in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1997). See especially pp. 36–7.

² For an overview and bibliography of the emergence of 'urban historical

from the social history of urban life, retains its distinctiveness in producing accounts of the city as a 'historicized subject': 'The urban historian considers the multiple variables that together constitute the city as both a historicized subject and an object for historical study. The city is thus accorded an agency in its own construction and synthesis.'³

However, modern urban histories did not emerge fully formed in eighteenth-century Britain from an existing silence about towns and their histories. While medieval Britain did not produce extensive urban histories in the chronological or chronicle formats of medieval Italian models, we can nonetheless identify a longstanding antiquarian interest in the history of towns and cities as part of the landscape of post-Roman Britain, expressed through various genres including national history, topography, urban description and chorography. Town chronicles, concerned specifically with charters, privileges and governance of individual towns, often included references to significant historical events associated with the town. Though often not recognised as 'urban history', these medieval and early modern texts about British towns are homologous with, and often directly influenced by, classical Latin and later Italian histories of the great cities and city-states of the Italian peninsula.

The Italian presence in late medieval Britain was significant and influential. Besides their transformative contribution to banking and fiscal practice, Italians brought with them administrative and intellectual innovations from their highly-developed urban centres. By the fourteenth century in Britain, the most important foreign influence on English urban governance was Italian. Brunetto Latini's (c. 1210–94) treatise on civic government, *Li Livres dou Tresor* (c. 1264), had been copied in London in about 1325, and excerpts were included in London's *Liber custumarum* (c. 1300), revised to make it applicable to the mayor, suggesting 'an active interest in civic philosophies of government among London clerks'.⁴ In his magisterial account of the legend of Troy in his

geography' as a discipline in the 1980s and 1990s, see T. F. Ruiz, 'Urban Historical Geography and the Writing of Late Medieval Urban History', in *A Companion to the Medieval World*, ed. C. Lansing and E. D. English (Oxford, 2009), pp. 397–412.

³ S. Ewen, *What is Urban History?* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 11–12.

⁴ S. Rees Jones, 'Thomas More's *Utopia* and Medieval London', in *Pragmatic Utopias: Ideals and Communities, 1200–1630*, ed. R. Horrox and S. Rees Jones (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 117–35 (pp. 123–4); J. Campbell, 'Power and Authority 600–1300', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. 1: 600–1540, ed. D. M. Palliser (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 51–78 (p. 77); S. Reynolds, 'Medieval Urban History and the History of Political Thought', *Urban History* 9 (1982), 14–23 (pp. 22–3).

Troy Book, written between 1412 and 1420, John Lydgate deployed the kinds of *amplificatio* recommended by Latini in his *Tresor*.⁵

The Latin works of many of the humanist Italian historians are known to have circulated in Britain in the fifteenth century through antiquarians and book-collectors, most notably Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, who donated more than three hundred books to the University of Oxford between 1435 and 1444, mainly Latin works and translations from Greek texts made in Italy.⁶ Humphrey also commissioned from Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444) a Latin translation of Aristotle's *Politics*.⁷ Flavio Biondo (1392–1463) was in correspondence with Humphrey's chancellor, Thomas Beckington, and sent him a copy of his history of Rome, the *Decades*, now in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 205.⁸ Manuscripts and early printed copies of Biondo's work (*Roma instaurata* and *Italia illustrata* were both printed in Rome, in 1470 and 1474 respectively) also circulated in England, with a number of manuscript copies surviving in British libraries.⁹ There were sufficient opportunities, then, for Italian urban histories to circulate in Britain and for British writers to embrace the new humanist history of the fifteenth century.

When considering historiographical practice during the Roman empire and afterwards in the city-states of Italy, we see clearly that an interest in urban history is closely connected to a sense of political independence. Cities like Athens, Rome, Constantinople and Jerusalem were metonyms for the empires they headed, symbolic of wealth, power and imperial ambition. Urban histories of these places confirmed the antiquity and reach of their political power as crucial centres for wealth generation, for the education of imperial leaders, and for the cultivation of corporate memory, both administrative and religious. In the late antique and medieval periods, histories of the great Italian cities of Florence,

⁵ D. Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (London, 1970), p. 129.

⁶ C. M. Ady, 'Italian Influences on English History', *History* 9.36 (1924), 288–301 (p. 291).

⁷ D. Wakelin, 'Early Humanism in England', in *Oxford History of Classical Reception*, vol. 1, ed. R. Copeland (Oxford, 2016), pp. 487–514. The manuscript, or a copy of it, is now in the Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F. 5. 27. Bruni failed, however, to get the rewards from Humphrey that he had hoped for: see D. Hay, 'Flavio Biondo and the Middle Ages', in *Renaissance Essays* (London, 1988), pp. 35–66 (p. 38). On Humphrey's contribution to the spread of humanism in England, see A. Petrina, *Cultural Politics in Fifteenth-Century England: The Case of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester* (Leiden, 2004).

⁸ R. Weiss, *Humanism in England during the Fifteenth Century*, 4th edn, ed. D. Rundle and A. J. Lappin (Oxford, 2009), p. 112.

⁹ Several copies of *Roma instaurata* survive in the British Library (BL) (MS Harley 4913, MS Additional 21956 and 17375) and at least two copies of *Italia illustrata* also survive (BL, MS Sloane 2456; Oxford, Balliol College, MS 286).

Milan and Venice attested to their significance as independent states and as the leaders of economic empires. Italian urban historiography therefore had a political purpose which directed much of its content.

In medieval Britain, no city, not even London, enjoyed anything comparable to the independence of the Italian city-states, whose political autonomy demanded both justification and celebration.¹⁰ As the medieval kings of England strove to centralize the monarchy and reconcile the competing demands of different languages and peoples, the invention of a seamless England and Wales, neatly divided up into shires and counties and towns, was part of a project to create a single nation led by a single king. The medieval descriptions and foundational accounts of towns and cities therefore had a political function, like the Italian urban histories, but one mainly focused away from the towns themselves and towards their role as topographical points on the map of the kingdom, functioning as the commercial and administrative hubs which underpinned the unity and prosperity of the nation.

The new attention paid to towns and cities in the early modern period can be linked to the rise of humanistic writing in Britain, to the influence of classical and Italian models of civic history, and, arguably, to the emergence of something approaching the civic identity and independence that had been manifest in Italy at least two centuries earlier. What gives the British tradition of urban history its coherence, from late-antique descriptions of Roman cities in Britain to humanist accounts of the commercial life of cities, is its common concern with the significance of city and town within the larger political agendas of kingdom and nation.

Classical models of urban history

Urban history was known in the classical period in the form of (often lengthy) chronological accounts of cities, especially Rome, as civic communities. From their foundation and beginnings to their current condition and nature – population, resources, products, administration and customs – cities were shown to have evolved from the distant past to their present form. We can identify three different kinds of urban history in the classical tradition which were significant for later writing, both in Britain and in the Italian peninsula. First, there are the full-scale histories of Rome produced in Greek by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in

¹⁰ Medieval British towns were self-governing but not independent of higher authority, as the Italian city-states were. See S. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900–1300* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 155–202.

his multi-volume *Roman Antiquities* and in Latin by Titus Livius (Livy) in his *Ab urbe condita*, 'From the Foundation of the City' (both written in the first century BC), histories which drew on urban annals kept in Rome.¹¹

Secondly, and more commonly, brief urban histories and origin legends were sometimes included with descriptions of towns and cities in national or regional geographies and chorographies, such as those by Cato the elder (*Origines*, c. 168 BC), Strabo (the *Geographica*, late 1st century BC) and Pomponius Mela, whose *De chorographia*, a lightning tour of imperial Europe, Asia and Africa, was published in 43 or 44 AD.¹² Chorography is essentially regional description, written as if the author were in an aeroplane flying low over the landscape and noting its hills and rivers, towns and valleys. Both Strabo and Pomponius Mela included historical and ethnographical detail in their verbal maps, including brief descriptions of towns, but the main function of chorography was to mark out the borders of a territory or empire of which towns and cities were among the key features.

Thirdly, urban history could be combined with the rhetorical practices of encomium and epideixis, in which a city is praised in terms of its location, wealth, citizens and its long and illustrious history. Epideictic orations were commonly delivered at festivals and other urban celebrations and are specifically associated with urban culture. Often composed in praise of high-profile individuals, by the time of the Roman empire they were increasingly used to praise cities, countries and individual buildings as well. In this kind of epideictic rhetoric, orators praising a city often give a brief historical survey to enhance its prestige. Thus in

¹¹ A. Mehl, *Roman Historiography: An Introduction to its Basic Aspects and Development*, trans. H.-F. Mueller (Oxford, 2011), pp. 37–40. Michael Comber distinguishes between the annalistic tradition of history practised by Livy and the public history established by Cato the elder. See 'Re-reading the Roman Historians', in *A Companion to Historiography*, ed. M. Bentley (London, 1997), pp. 43–56.

¹² See, for example, Pomponius's brief account of the city of Iope (Jaffa) in Palestine and its mythological connections: F. E. Romer, *Pomponius Mela's Description of the World* (Ann Arbor, 1998), p. 53. The origins of chorography as a method of regional mapping was established by Ptolemy in his *Geographia*, a text that found a new readership in the early fifteenth century and helped to disseminate the genre of Renaissance chorography. Though Ptolemy considered chorography to be inferior to what he saw as the more scientific practice of geography, medieval chorography provided a more flexible means of representing what was generally believed about a particular location, allowing for 'the inclusion of features whose existence could not be proven but which nonetheless remained a certainty for the people of the time': J. Simon, 'Chorography Reconsidered: An Alternative Approach to the Ptolemaic Definition', in *Mapping Medieval Geographies: Geographical Encounters in the Latin West and Beyond, 300–1600*, ed. K. D. Lilley (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 23–44 (p. 43).

his oration in praise of the city of Antioch, Libanius, writing in Greek in the fourth century AD, begins with a topographical account of the city and its favourable location before introducing the theme of its history, which is essentially the history of its great men:

Concerning the nature of the land, then, and the temperate blending of the climate and the situation with respect to the sea, enough perhaps has been said. It would be well to go on concerning the noble lineage of those who possess the region, and of the first settlers and those who followed them and those again who came later, and to demonstrate to all, how the best of lands has come to be the possession of the best of men, like a well-made ship in the hands of good sailors.¹³

Libanius goes on to give an account of the legendary founding of the city by gods and heroes, which would clearly appeal to his listeners in Antioch, and follows this with a history of the building of the city by Seleucus, an officer who had served under Alexander the Great:

Then Seleucus collected artisans representing every skill, all sources of labor for assistance, and all the finest possible stones. Forests were cut down for roofs, and wealth was poured into the work of building. Outlining the city, he stationed the elephants at intervals, at the places where the towers were to be, and to mark out the length and breadth of colonnades and side streets he used, for the dividing lines, wheat which had been brought by ships which stood in the river.¹⁴

Libanius specifically draws attention to the difference between his own speech, written to be recited at the Olympic games held in Antioch in 360, and the formal histories which provide a chronological narration, unlike his own rhetorical presentation: 'The historical treatises will preserve exact accounts; we need speak only of so much as is fitting for the present occasion.'¹⁵

There are a number of classical models of urban history, then, which reappear in medieval Italian city histories and in other kinds of history produced in Britain. The work of classical historians and geographers such as Livy, Tacitus, Sallust and Pomponius Mela survived in antique manuscripts which were copied and disseminated during

¹³ 'Libanius' Oration in Praise of Antioch (Oration XI)', trans. G. Downey, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 103 (1959), 652–86, ch. 42 (p. 659). For further commentary on the oration, see A. F. Norman, *Antioch as a Centre of Hellenic Culture as Observed by Libanius* (Liverpool, 2000). The standard edition of the Greek text is *Libanii Opera*, Vol. 1, fasc. 2, *Orationes VI–XI*, ed. R. Foerster (Leipzig, 1903; rpt. Hildesheim, 1963), XI, pp. 437–535.

¹⁴ 'Libanius' Oration', trans. Downey, chs. 89–90 (p. 663).

¹⁵ 'Libanius' Oration', trans. Downey, ch. 43 (p. 659).

the Carolingian revival, to re-emerge largely as a result of humanist scholarship.¹⁶ Writers of the late antique period also helped to transmit classical history in the form of summaries and compilations, such as the *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* ('Collection of memorable things') made by C. Iulius Solinus in the third century. Drawn largely from the works of Pliny the Elder and Pomponius Mela, Solinus's compendium is cited by Augustine, Isidore of Seville, Aldhelm, Bede and later Ranulph Higden in his *Polychronicon*, indicating the popularity of the work throughout the Middle Ages. Isidore himself, writing in the early seventh century, provided models for the description of towns and countries and for the writing of history, which were influential for medieval historians.

Urban history in medieval Britain

Compared to the Italian city-states and their satellites which emerged from the twelfth century onwards, the towns and cities of medieval Britain were unremarkable. London's population in the fifteenth century is estimated to have been around 40,000, vast in comparison to other cities in Britain but barely half the size of the great Italian cities such as Florence, which had a population of about 90,000 by the fourteenth century.¹⁷ Italian visitors to Britain in 1500 commented with surprise that the country had only three cities of any importance, Bristol, York and London.¹⁸ The economy of Britain, despite the rapid commercialization of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, remained predominantly agrarian until well into the modern period. As Edward Soja says, 'The vast majority of the population almost everywhere in the world until the nineteenth century lived outside the major cities, although mainly within their sphere of territorial control.'¹⁹ In medieval Britain, the 'sphere of territorial control' exerted by the towns and cities was considerably narrower than that of the Italian states.

¹⁶ The works of these authors were little known in the Middle Ages until rediscovered by Italian humanists including Petrarch and Boccaccio. On Petrarch and Livy see L. D. Reynolds, 'Livy', and on Boccaccio and Tacitus see R. J. Tarrant and M. Winterbottom, 'Tacitus', both in *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. L. D. Reynolds (Oxford, 1983), pp. 205–14 and 406–11 respectively. On the popularity of Livy and the rediscovery of Tacitus, see J. H. Whitfield, 'Livy > Tacitus', in *Classical Influences on European Culture, AD 1500–1700*, ed. R. R. Bolgar (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 281–94.

¹⁷ E. Jones, *Metropolis* (Oxford, 1990), p. 62.

¹⁸ *A Relation, or rather a True Account, of the Island of England* [. . .] *about the Year 1500*, ed. C. A. Sneyd, Camden Society 37 (London, 1847).

¹⁹ E. W. Soja, *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions* (Oxford, 2000), p. 69.

Given the relative underdevelopment of British cities in the Middle Ages, the emergence of anything approaching an urban or civic identity is a late medieval phenomenon. It could be argued that a text such as Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, composed during the last two decades of the fourteenth century, expresses an internalized urban identity in that many of the tales are located in urban environments and Chaucer implicitly positions London as the metropolitan centre of a regional English hinterland. In his portrait of the Parson, for example, in the 'General Prologue' to *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer praises the Parson for remaining in his poor (rural) parish rather than abandoning it and hastening towards the glamour and comparative riches of London.²⁰ Middle English romances such as *Beues of Hamtoun* and *Melusine* preserve the interest of their French originals in the foundation legends of individual towns. On the whole, however, the predominance (and popularity) of the literary model of chivalric romance, featuring fantasy locations in manorial landscapes, forest worlds, or exotic international fortresses, remained largely unchallenged until the end of the fifteenth century, depriving towns of any meaningful history and positioning them as adjuncts to knightly concerns or as mundane locations for comic events.

What does emerge among medieval historians in Britain is an interest in towns and cities as part of the landscape and history of the island of Britain. Neither in size nor wealth could medieval British cities compete with those of other heirs of the Roman empire. Only in terms of age could the older towns claim some comparable status. Not surprisingly, then, the point of most urban description in British historical texts is to emphasize the antiquity of towns. The authorized list of twenty-eight towns, all Roman in origin, was deliberately adapted by Henry of Huntingdon from older lists in Bede, Gildas and the *Historia Brittonum* as a way of guaranteeing their antiquity and authenticity. Since these cities still remained, often in ruins, as visible features of the British landscape, they served as witnesses to the antiquity of the English themselves as a homogeneous people (conveniently eliding the Welsh) who had inherited the land of the Romans.

Geoffrey of Monmouth and Henry of Huntingdon included in their histories some account of the origins of English towns as part of their construction of the foundation myths of the English people. Just as Libanius promoted illustrious mythological beginnings for Antioch

²⁰ Geoffrey Chaucer, 'General Prologue', *The Canterbury Tales*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, gen. ed. L. D. Benson, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1988), ll. 477–528. See also D. Wallace, 'Chaucer and the Absent City', in *Chaucer's England: Literature in Historical Context*, ed. B. A. Hanawalt (Minneapolis, 1992), pp. 59–90.

in order to flatter the present-day inhabitants and rulers, so medieval historians emphasized the foundations of towns as part of the myth of nationhood. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* (c. 1136) was a seminal work in the promotion of urban origin myths. His explanation of how London got its name depends on a historical account of the city's origins and its rulers:

Post illum successit Heli filius eius regnumque .lx. annis tractauit. Hic tres generauit filios, Lud, Cassibellaunum, Nennium. Quorum primogenitus, uidelicet Lud, regnum post obitum patris suscepit. Exin, gloriosus aedificator urbium existens, renouauit muros urbis Trinouantum et innumerabilibus turribus eam circumcinxit. Praecepit etiam ciuibus ut domos et aedificia sua in eadem construerent ita ut non esset in longe positis regnis ciuitas quae pulciora palacia contineret. Fuit ipse bellicosus homo et in dandis epulis profusus, et cum plures ciuitates possideret hanc prae omnibus amabat et in illa maiori tempore totius anni commanebat. Vnde nominata fuit postmodum Kaerlud et deinde per corruptionem nominis Kaerlundein; succedente quoque tempore, per commutationem linguarum dicta fuit Lundene et postea Lundres, applicantibus alienigenis qui patriam sibi submittebant. Defuncto tandem illo, corpus eius reconditum fuit in praedicta ciuitate iuxta portam illam quae adhuc de nomine suo Porhlud Britannice, Saxonice uero Ludesgata nuncupatur.²¹

'He [Cligueillus] was succeeded by his son Heli, who ruled for sixty years. Heli had three sons, Lud, Cassibellaunus, and Nennius. Lud, as eldest, succeeded after his father's death. He was a great builder of cities, who repaired the walls of Trinouantum and surrounded it with numerous towers. He commanded its citizens to build homes and houses there, so that no foreign city could boast finer palaces. A warrior and a generous feast-giver, he possessed many cities, but always preferred Trinouantum and used to spend the greater part of the year there. Later it was renamed Kaerlud, a name afterwards corrupted to Kaerlundein; as time passed and languages changed, it was called Lundene and then Lundres when foreigners landed and conquered the country. When Lud died, his body was buried there beside the gate which is still named after him, Porhlud in British and Ludgate in English.'

Geoffrey provides similar linguistic origins for a number of English towns, including Bath, Winchester, Canterbury and Carlisle, whose names are supposedly derived from their legendary founders.

²¹ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, ed. M. D. Reeve, trans. N. Wright (Woodbridge, 2007), Book 3, ch. 53 (pp. 67–8).

Though Henry of Huntingdon wrote the first version of his *Historia Anglorum*, 'History of the English People', in 1130, before Geoffrey had completed the *Historia regum Britanniae*, once Henry had seen a copy of Geoffrey's text, at Le Bec in 1139, he made some minor revisions to his third version which incorporated sections of Geoffrey's material, particularly those concerning the rulers of Britain before the coming of the Saxons.²² Henry's description of England owes much to the classical mode of geography, though his interests are mainly political and ecclesiastical rather than topographical, and his purpose is to map the kingdom of England as a distinct nation. As well as providing the list of twenty-eight British cities founded before the coming of the Saxons, Henry invented the idea of the Heptarchy, that is, the seven kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England, as part of his project to assert the unity of the kingdom of England under a strong central monarchy.²³

Henry's history influenced a number of similar 'descriptions' of the religious and political divisions of the country, including the anonymous Anglo-Norman 'Description of England' and Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon*. The Anglo-Norman 'Description of England' was probably composed in the 1140s and is found on its own and as part of larger historical works, notably Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*, 'History of the English'. It describes the division of England into Saxon kingdoms, shires and bishoprics and is clearly drawn from Henry of Huntingdon's chronicle with additional details from Geoffrey of Monmouth. But rather than merely listing the shires and cities, as Henry does, the 'Description' provides brief accounts of each place, bringing Wales into the picture as well with a short account of its ecclesiastical situation under Norman rule:

Mais de Guals parlerai,
De cez de la vus dirai.
En Wales ot plusurs citez
Que mult par furent renumez
Cum Carwein e Karliun
E la cité de Snaudun,
E la si ot .v. evesquez
E un autre arcevesquez.
De cez n'i ad ore remés for treis;
De cez vus dirai les faiz.
A Saint David en est li uns

²² Henry, archdeacon of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, *The History of the English People*, ed. and trans. D. Greenway (Oxford, 1996), pp. ci–cii.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. lx–lxi.

Qui jadis fud a Karliuns;
Ço fud jadis arcevesquié,
Ore si est povre evesquié.²⁴

'But I will speak of Wales, of this I will tell you. In Wales were many cities of which many were renamed, such as Caerwent and Caerleon and the city of Caer Seint, and there used to be five bishops and an archbishop. Of these there are now but three left; I will tell you the facts of it. The one who was formerly at Caerleon has gone to St David's; that which used to be an archbishopric is now a poor bishopric.'

The towns of Wales, optimistically called 'cities' on the basis of their supposed episcopal status, are here incorporated into the imagined unity of the kingdom of England. They provide a testament to the civilizing influence of the Romans in Britain, commemorated in the prefix *caer*, '(fortified) city', from Latin *castra*. At the same time, these towns are invoked as religious centres, associated with bishops and churches, as if empty of residents or the urban culture of trade and commerce.

Towns as statements of the power of the church and its saints, implicitly set against the secular power of the monarch, feature regularly in topographical descriptions of Britain, updating the rhetorical models of classical and late-antique writers to support the empire of Christendom. In his *Gesta pontificum Anglorum* (c. 1125), William of Malmesbury includes brief descriptions of cathedral towns as a prelude to his account of their bishops. In each case, William describes the site and situation of the town, sometimes commenting on its beauty (or lack of it, in the case of Glastonbury), suggesting that he was aware of the rhetorical precepts of the *encomium urbis*, the formal eulogy of a town, including topography, beauty and utility.²⁵ With regard to the latter, William often selects one specific feature to act as a metonym for the whole: Canterbury is the city of saints, London the city of commerce, York an important port whose ruined Roman grandeur is a reminder of its glorious past. In keeping with his chorographical approach to the towns and monasteries

²⁴ A. Bell, 'The Anglo-Norman *Description of England*: An Edition', in *Anglo-Norman Anniversary Essays*, ed. I. Short (London, 1993), pp. 31–47, ll. 179–92. On the identification of 'Snaudon' (Snowdon) with the Roman fort of Segontium ('Caer Seint' in Welsh) near Caernarfon in north Wales, see R. S. Loomis, 'Scotland and the Arthurian Legend', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 89 (1995–6), 1–21 (pp. 15–17).

²⁵ The Latin genres of urban praise and urban description have been described by J. Scattergood, 'Misrepresenting the City: Genre, Intertextuality and FitzStephen's *Description of London* (c. 1173)', in *Reading the Past: Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. J. Scattergood (Dublin, 1996), pp. 15–36. See also H. Fulton, 'The *Encomium Urbis* in Medieval Welsh Poetry', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 26 (2006), 54–72.

he describes, he often comments on the customs or habits of the citizens, as in his description of York:

Secundae post Cantuariam dignitatis est Eboracum, urbs ampla et metropolis, elegantiae Romanae preferens inditium. A duabus partibus Husae fluminis edificata includit medio sinu sui naues a Germania et Hibernia uenientes. Furori aquilonalium gentium prima semper obnoxia, barbaricos Danorum motus toto tempore quo dominati sunt Angli excepit et ingemuit [. . .] Vrbes olim preclaras, turres proceritate sua in caelum minantes, agros laetos pascuis, irriguos fluuiis, si quis modo uidet peregrinus, ingemit, si quis uetus incola, non agnoscit. In aliquibus tamen parietum ruinis, qui semirutii remansere, uideas mira Romanorum artificia [. . .] Sane tota lingua Nordanhimbrorum, et maxime in Eboraco, ita inconditum stridet ut nichil nos australes intelligere possimus.²⁶

‘Next after Canterbury in importance is York, a large metropolitan city, showing signs of the taste of the Romans. Built on both sides of the river Ouse, it can receive into its very heart ships arriving from Germany and Ireland. It was ever the first city to be exposed to the furious assaults of the northern peoples; and for the whole time of the English domination it sustained, and lamented, the barbaric invasions of the Danes [. . .] Cities once brilliant, towers lofty enough to threaten heaven itself, fields smiling with pasture and watered by rivers, are matter for lament to a stranger who sees them now, and an old inhabitant fails to recognize them. In some of the ruined buildings, though, whose walls were not completely destroyed, you may see remarkable Roman work [. . .] Of course, the whole language of the Northumbrians, particularly in York, is so inharmonious and uncouth that we southerners can make nothing of it.’

For William, the importance of a town or city is measured by its place in the episcopal hierarchy and the nature of its genealogy in relation to Roman origins. Evidence of local urban culture, such as the rough speech of the citizens of York, is noteworthy but a distraction from William’s construct of these British cities as global monuments to the unity and hegemony of the church.

This embryonic form of urban history as a by-product of geographical description was developed further by Ranulph Higden (d. 1364) in his *Polychronicon*, written in Chester in the first half of the fourteenth century.²⁷ A genuine ‘universal history’, covering the whole of the known

²⁶ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta pontificum Anglorum, The History of the English Bishops*, vol. I: Text and Translation, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 2007), Book 3, ch. 99 (pp. 324–7).

²⁷ For an account of Higden’s descriptions of Italy, see the essay by Margaret Bridges in this volume.

world, including a description and history of Rome, Higden's book includes a topographical and ethnographic account of Britain drawn mainly from Bede, Geoffrey of Monmouth, William of Malmesbury and Giraldus Cambrensis, covering its location, resources, marvels, political divisions, counties, shires, languages and its line of kings. Hugely popular, the British section of the *Polychronicon* was translated into English by John Trevisa in 1387, becoming a national history for the emerging English-speaking people.²⁸ A century later, in 1480, William Caxton printed his own selection of Trevisa's work under the title *The Description of Britain*, shaping it to produce a mixture of history, geography and legend which appealed to the late medieval English search for authentic origins. Chapter 9 of Caxton's version of Trevisa lists the twenty-eight ancient cities given by Henry of Huntingdon and includes a brief history of each city, culled from various sources:

William of Malmesbury tells us that York is a great city on both sides of the river Ouse. It looked as beautiful as Rome until King William the Conqueror destroyed it and the surrounding countryside with fire and flame, so that a pilgrim seeing it now would weep if he had known it in former days. Geoffrey of Monmouth says that Ebrancus, the fifth King of the Britons, built York and named it Caerbranc after himself. He also built two other noble cities, one in Scotland, namely Edinburgh, and another near Scotland, on the borders of England, called Alclud. Again, Ranulph informs us that Edinburgh is a city in the land of the Picts between the River Tweed and the Scottish sea. It was once known as 'The Castle of Maidens' and was later called Edinburgh after Edan, King of the Picts, who reigned there in the time of King Egfrith of Northumbria.²⁹

There was clearly an interest among medieval historians in the origins of British towns, but it was not until the late fifteenth century that Caxton, shrewd midwife to the birth of English nationalism, began to make some kind of cohesive sense of the various accounts of urban foundations and to attempt the beginnings of an urban history for the oldest English towns. Even then, Caxton's interest was basically the same as that of the earlier historians: to construct a national identity for the English by

²⁸ For a survey of the *Polychronicon* and its English readers, see D. R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 13–16; A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, vol. 2: c. 1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century (London, 1982), pp. 43–57; J. Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford, 1966).

²⁹ William Caxton, *The Description of England*, ed. M. Collins (London, 1988), pp. 66–7. See also K. Tonry, 'Reading History in Caxton's *Polychronicon*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 111 (2012), 169–98.

reference to their ancient Roman past, of which the oldest towns were still a visible reminder.

A second kind of text in which urban history often appears in medieval texts is the kind of epideictic description, based on classical models, in which a city is praised as part of a eulogy to an important individual associated with it. Alcuin's famous poem to the bishops of York, composed in the late 770s, aims to praise the holy churchmen of York and, in so doing, to locate York as the centre of the Northumbrian kingdom.³⁰ In order to construct York as a place of religious significance, Alcuin begins with a rhetorical description of the city and its early history, all standard *topoi* of classical epideixis, mixed into a rather highly-coloured historical account of the city's foundation and development:

Hanc Romana manus muris et turribus altam
fundavit primo, comites sociosque laborum
indigenas tantum gentes adhibendo Britannas –
nam tunc Romanos fecunda Britannia reges
sustinuit, merito mundi qui sceptras regebant –
ut foret emporium terrae commune marisque [. . .]
Hinc Romana manus turbatis undique sceptris
postquam secessit cupiens depellere saevos
hostes Hesperiae regnum sedemque tueri,
urbis tunc tenuit sceptrum gens pigra Britonum.³¹

'York, with its high walls and lofty towers, was first built
By Roman hands, that summoned only the native Britons
As comrades and partners in the labour –
For at that time the Romans, rightly supreme
Throughout the world, held fertile Britain in their sway –
To be a general seat of commerce by land and sea alike [. . .]
After the Roman troops, their empire in turmoil,
had withdrawn, intending to rout their savage foe
and to defend Italy, their native realm,
the slothful race of Britons then held sway over York.'

The same rhetorical and epideictic impulse motivates one of the most significant examples of urban history and description from medieval

³⁰ Alcuin was trained in the cathedral school at York and was master there before moving in 781 to Charlemagne's court, from where his eulogy to York was written. On the poem and its function, see D. A. Bullough, 'Hagiography as Patriotism: Alcuin's York Poem and the Early Northumbrian *vitae sanctorum*', in *Hagiographie, cultures et sociétés, IV^e–XII^e siècles* (Paris, 1981), pp. 339–59.

³¹ Text and translation from *Alcuin: Bishops, Kings and Saints of York*, ed. and trans. P. Godman (Oxford, 1983), ll. 19–24 and 38–41.

Britain, William FitzStephen's description of London, prefaced to his life of Thomas Becket written between 1173 and 1175.³² As part of his project to praise London as the fitting home of the saint, FitzStephen provides a rounded description of its location and layout, its wealth from trade, its fine buildings and the customs of its people. He also attempts to give some historical context by referring to London's ancient origins and to the many illustrious citizens it has produced. He follows Geoffrey of Monmouth in claiming that London is older than Rome itself:

Urbe Roma, secundum chronicorum fidem, satis antiquior est. Ab eisdem quippe patribus Trojanis haec prius a Bruto condita est, quam illa a Remo et Romulo; unde et adhuc antiquis eisdem utuntur legibus, communibus institutis. Haec etiam similiter illi regionibus est distincta [. . .]³³

'On the evidence of the chroniclers, [London] is more ancient than Rome. Both originating from the same Trojan ancestors, this [city] was founded by Brutus before that one by Romulus and Remus; even up to now, they both use the same laws and communal statutes. This [city] is divided in the same way [as Rome] into wards [. . .]'

A third type of writing about towns and their history in medieval Britain, and one which comes closest to articulating a civic identity from within the town, is represented by the urban chronicles produced by a number of major towns. These were usually in the form of annals listing events in each year which were of significance to the civic authorities, such as the elections of mayors and other office-holders. They are therefore largely diachronic, recounting the year by year events of urban life, just as monasteries kept their own accounts of events which concerned the individual monastic community. We know that records were kept in most towns, particularly the borough towns, in the form of charters, council books, court rolls, ordinances and so on, though much of this material has not survived, and what does survive tends to date from the later Middle Ages.³⁴

Such annals had been common in Europe since the days of the Roman

³² Scattergood, 'Misrepresenting the City'.

³³ William FitzStephen, 'Description of London', in *Elenchus fontium historiae urbanae*, vol. II.2, ed. S. Reynolds, W. de Boer and G. Mac Niocaill (Leiden, 1988), pp. 76–83, ll. 8–12 (p. 80). An English translation of the text is attached to a number of editions of Stow's *Survey*: see for example John Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed. C. L. Kingsford, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1908), II, 218–29.

³⁴ On the kinds of urban record that survive, including the diaries and correspondence of leading merchants, see C. M. Barron, 'Sources for Medieval Urban History', in *Understanding Medieval Primary Sources: Using Historical Sources to Discover Medieval Europe*, ed. J. T. Rosenthal (London, 2012), pp. 163–76.

empire. *Acta urbis* had been kept in imperial Rome to commemorate festivals, military victories and other events which constructed the city as a cohesive and mythic space. Accompanied by consular lists, with the names of consuls marking each year, these annals were Christianized in late antiquity, forming something like a liturgical calendar for the early Byzantine world. Both pagan and Christian chronicles imbued the variety of annual events – ‘imperial births, deaths and marriages, accessions, anniversaries and arrivals in cities; victories and the reception of ambassadors; depositions of relics; dedications of churches and other public buildings; earthquakes, comets and an assortment of prodigies’³⁵ – with mythological and religious significance, laying down a pattern of association between urban ritual and religion which was to endure throughout the Middle Ages.

Urban chronicles, unlike some other kinds of histories, were addressed to audiences of city officials and ‘insiders’, those who lived and worked in the city or identified with it, and the practice survived in a number of the post-imperial cities of Europe which retained a distinctive civic identity. In Florence, chronicles were kept throughout the medieval period, mainly by merchants writing in the vernacular for their peers and business associates.³⁶ Urban chronicles were kept in Milan from the eleventh century and in smaller cities such as Bergamo and Como from the twelfth century, expressing the economic and civic identity of the commune model of urban life.³⁷ In Genoa, the tradition of urban chronicles dated back to the twelfth century, while Venice drew on a rich archive of chronicles beginning in the early eleventh century.³⁸

The towns of Germany also produced numerous town chronicles from the fourteenth century onwards. A vigorous culture of urban administration, which ensured that even the smallest towns had their own scribe, resulted in a wealth of chronicles, often by named writers, recording the major events of the town and its history. There was no standard format but rather the focus of each chronicle, whether political, genealogical or historical, depended on the objectives of the writer, summarised by F. R. H. Du Boulay into seven main categories: ‘to furnish

³⁵ B. Croke, ‘City Chronicles of Late Antiquity’, in *Reading the Past in Late Antiquity*, ed. G. Clarke (Canberra, 1990), pp. 165–204 (p. 192).

³⁶ For a survey of these, see C. Bec, *Les marchands écrivains: affaires et humanisme à Florence 1375–1434* (Paris, 1967).

³⁷ E. Coleman, ‘Lombard City Annals and the Social and Cultural History of Northern Italy’, in *Chronicling History: Chroniclers and Historians in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, ed. S. Dale, A. Williams Lewin and D. J. Osheim (University Park PA, 2007), pp. 1–28 (pp. 1–2).

³⁸ E. Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago, 1981), pp. 60–62.

memorials of a leading family; to record the ceremonial reception of kings; to keep reports on feuds and wars in which the town engaged against external enemies; to chronicle internal rebellions; to gratify the private wish of the chronicler in recording whatever he wished about his town's history; to write a chronicle for the literate town public on the chronicler's own initiative; and to write a town chronicle or history for money or reward on the overt commission of the town.³⁹

English town chronicles are far fewer in number than the German ones and comprise in most cases the anonymous records of civic administrators, but they represent a similar 'insider' viewpoint, written by and for the citizens themselves. Inevitably, the oldest chronicles are those from London, with the earliest surviving example being the *Liber de antiquis legibus* compiled in 1274. The London letter books also preserve material relating to the administrative affairs of the metropolis, and the *Annales Londonienses* attributed to Andrew Horn in the fourteenth century provide a legal slant on civic organization.⁴⁰ Horn, as a government official, had an antiquarian interest in English history, emphasising the origins of the Angles and Saxons and using anecdotes from English history as precedents for the governance of London.

A similar approach was adopted by the compilers of the *Liber albus*, 'The White Book of the City of London', put together in 1419 and attributed to John Carpenter and Richard Whittington, mayor of London. Providing a summary of charters, oaths, guild regulations and other information about the administration of the city, the collection was apparently intended as a reference book for incoming clerks and officials. A few references to the history of London as a city are included with historical accounts of some of the statutes, demonstrating their antiquity, and therefore their legitimacy, by attaching them to the reigns of previous kings. The historical element in the *Liber albus* is therefore political as much as urban. For example, its account of the foundation of London, which an urban historian might have foregrounded early in the book, is in fact tucked away in Book 3 as part of a history of the Statutes and Ordinances relating to the removal of 'kidels' (i.e. weirs fitted with illegal fishing nets) from the Thames. The opening section establishes the rights of Londoners, from the very beginnings of the city, to control the affairs of the city and, most importantly, its river:

³⁹ F. R. H. Du Boulay, 'The German Town Chroniclers', in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Richard William Southern*, ed. R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (Oxford, 1981), pp. 445–69 (p. 449).

⁴⁰ See J. Catto, 'Andrew Horn: Law and History in Fourteenth-Century England', in *Writing of History in the Middle Ages*, ed. Davis and Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 367–92.

Brut, the First Monarch of Britain.

In the year from the beginning of the World 4032, and before our Lord's Incarnation 1200, the city that is now called 'London', founded in imitation of Great Troy, was constructed and built by King Brut, the first monarch of Britain, being at first [called] 'New Troy', and afterwards 'Trinovant': of which foundation, building, and construction, the river Thames was the cause. And of this city and river, both Dukes, Mayors, Wardens, Sheriffs, Aldermen, and nobles, [citizens] of the before-mentioned city, have heretofore had and held the governance.⁴¹

The historical interest here resides squarely with the rights of London's citizens to self-government, including their control of the river Thames. Though history is always political in the broadest sense, this kind of urban history subordinates the narrative of the city to the interests of its government. It is hard not to see here the influence of Italian models of urban history which promote republican values, particularly Leonardo Bruni's *Laudatio Florentinae urbis* (1403–4), discussed further below.

Something a little more like modern urban history is the account of Bristol given by Robert Ricart in his 'Mayor's Calendar', but this was written in the late fifteenth century, just as Caxton was publishing his *Description of Britain*, and both were harbingers of the antiquarian renaissance that would find its fullest expression in the next century. Again, Ricart's version of urban history is very much in the mould of Geoffrey of Monmouth and Henry of Huntingdon, with the foundation of Bristol attached to an ancient British nobleman, Brynne, and contextualized in the wider history of England itself as a single nation. In his summary of the first section of his Calendar, Ricart sets out these priorities:

Primum Principale

The first to shewe by cronicle the begynnyng and furst foundacioun of this saide worshipfull Toune of Bristowe, which was here furst sett and billed vpon a litill hille by twene iiij. Yatis, *scilicet*, Seinte Nicholas yate, Seinte Johnes yate, Seint Leonardis yate, and the newe yate, bi that noble prince Bryneus, brother vnto Kyng Bellynus, tofore Thencarnacioun of Crist by recorde of Brutes cronicles. And of al the kynges that were in Englonde affore the Conquest, conveied in a bregement with the yeres of their reigne, and how many of them were kinges anyoynted.⁴²

⁴¹ *Liber albus: The White Book of the City of London*, trans. H. T. Riley (London, 1861), Book III, Part iv (p. 427). See also M. McLaren, *The London Chronicles of the Fifteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2002); C. M. Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People, 1200–1500* (Oxford, 2004).

⁴² *The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar by Robert Ricart*, ed. L. T. Smith (London, 1872), p. 3.

The kinds of urban history that I have listed here, embedded in national histories, eulogies, descriptions and city chronicles, illustrate a continuous interest throughout the Middle Ages in the political and religious status of towns and their historical past, written either from the 'outsider' viewpoint of historians situated somewhere external to the city, or from an 'insider' viewpoint addressed to the people of the town itself. In all these urban commentaries, the dominant mode is topographical, including an interest in the architecture and layout of the towns, their walls and gates and their location in the wider landscape. It is this topographical perspective, particularly when represented through an external focalization, that prepared the way for the Renaissance revival of chorography.

Early modern antiquarianism and urban history

The new interest in urban history during the Renaissance can be associated with the intellectual movement known as humanism which, among other things, focused on the individual as a source of agency. By analogy, and in line with their growing independence from feudal authority, cities and towns came to be represented in texts as sovereign individuals, self-governing and autonomous, with their own histories and memories, their own physical shape or space, and their own organizational logic. Memory begins from the point where we develop a sense of self as an individual separate from other individuals. In the same way, towns and cities experienced a need to remember their pasts only when they developed a sense of identity as an urban community distinguishable from others. The *probi homines* who ruled the cities of late medieval and Renaissance Europe, not to mention the communes and city states of France and Italy, had every reason to proclaim the illustrious histories of their towns as a justification of their right to govern.

In Britain, the early modern shift in perspective towards the individualism of cities was influenced not only by cultural and economic contacts with the great city-states of Europe and by the expansion of the larger cities of the kingdom, but also by the increasing tendency of the dominant status groups to identify themselves, economically and socially, with cities. One of the most significant urban historians in Renaissance Britain was an urban 'insider', John Stow (c. 1525–1605). In 1598, he published the first edition of his *Survey of London*, which set out all he knew of the past history and present state of the city where he lived from his birth in 1525 to his death in 1605. Stow was already known as the author of the *Summary of the Chronicles of England*, first published in 1561 with eleven further editions by 1604, a short history

of England which became a standard textbook. For his *Survey of London*, the first extended history of the city, revised several times up until 1603, Stow combined the genres of chronicle and topographical description, the former well established as the normative historical mode, the latter derived from classical models which were reinvigorated in the fifteenth century.

Stow's methodology includes that of the classical mode of chorography, adapted to Renaissance practices of antiquarianism. His approach is not primarily chronological, but rather topographical, considering each aspect of the city in turn, beginning with a brief history of the Roman and Saxon origins of London, drawing mainly on Strabo, Tacitus, Caesar's *Gallic Wars* and Geoffrey of Monmouth. He then moves on to a more detailed description of its site and fortifications, describing the rivers, walls, gates and towers of the city. Finally, he gives a descriptive list of eminent citizens and a street-by-street guide to the city districts or wards.⁴³ Throughout the *Survey*, annals, lists and anecdotes interrupt what is essentially a topographical description. But this anecdotal style also constructs an historical dimension, so that Stow is providing not just a description of London and its buildings but also an urban history. Here is what he says, for example, about Aldgate when he is going through the list of the city's gates:

The next gate in the East is called *Aeldgate*, of the antiquitie or age thereof. The is one and the first of the foure principall gates, and also one of the seven double gates, mentioned by *Fitzstephen* [. . .] For antiquitie of the gate, it appeareth by the Charter of king *Edgar* to the knights of *Knighton Guild*, that in his dayes the said port was called *Aeldgate*, as ye may reade in the warde of *Portsoken*. Also *Matilde* the Queene wife of *Henrie* the first, having founded the Priorie of the holie Trinitie within *Aeldegate*, gave unto the same Church, to *Norman* the first Prior, and the Chanons that devoutly served God therein, the Porte of *Aeldegate*, and the soke or franchises thereunto belonging, with all customes as free as shee held the same: in the which Charter, she nameth the house *Christs Church*, and reporteth *Aeldegate* to be of his demaine.⁴⁴

This historical attention to names, events and references to primary sources such as charters (and to FitzStephen as a secondary source) is

⁴³ Benjamin Deneault, following Steven Mullaney, argues that Stow's tour of the city wards follows the route of Elizabeth I's inaugural procession through London and that Stow had 'possibly (probably?) witnessed Elizabeth's entrance to the city.' B. Deneault, "'The World Runs on Wheels': John Stow's Indescribable London', *English Literary History* 78 (2011), 337–58 (p. 338).

⁴⁴ Stow, *Survey*, ed. Kingsford, I, 29. This edition reproduces the text printed in 1603.

characteristic of the *Survey*'s antiquarian method, as is Stow's enjoyment of a good anecdote. In a lengthy section on the Tower of London, mentioning the foundation, building and layout of the various gates and drawbridges, Stow includes a chronological list of accidents that had happened in the Tower, such as the following:

In the yeare 1244, *Griffith* the eldest sonne of *Leoline*, prince of Wales, being kept prisoner in the Tower, devised meanes of escape, and having in the night made of the hangings, sheetes, &c. a long line, he put himselfe downe from the toppe of the Tower, but in the sliding, the weight of his body, being a very bigge and a fatte man, brake the rope, and he fell and brake his necke withall.⁴⁵

The function of such anecdotes is not merely to enliven the narrative but also to construct a sense of the richness of London's history, unfolding through its surviving buildings, famous inhabitants and proximity to royal power. The richness of London's history similarly appealed to Polydore Vergil (c. 1470–1555), the Italian diplomat, educated at Padua, who moved to England in 1502 and produced a series of books including the *Anglica historia*, first written in 1512–13 and later printed in three editions, the last of which appeared in 1555, and all of them revised and extended by Polydore himself.⁴⁶ Though Polydore's history of England focuses on monarchy and the crises of the fifteenth century, the printed editions included new descriptions of towns and frequent nuggets of information about London's history, especially its Roman origins and the names of mayors and magistrates during some of the years covered by the history.

Stow's *Survey* and Polydore Vergil's *Anglica historia* were part of a burgeoning interest in regional and urban history in Britain during the Renaissance, a form of classical reception which had manifested itself in Italy from the *trecento*. Histories of the major cities of Italy began as 'insider' chronicles whose function was to define the city and its ancient past for contemporary civic governments, a form of history which had no real parallel in medieval Britain. Dino Compagni (1255/60–1324) and Giovanni Villani (c. 1276–1348) both wrote vernacular chronicles of Florence in the first half of the fourteenth century, while Andrea Dandolo, doge of Venice from 1343 to 1354, wrote an unfinished history of Venice in Latin which 'aimed to provide an authoritative version of

⁴⁵ Stow, *Survey*, ed. Kingsford, I, 50. The anecdote about Gruffudd ap Llywelyn comes from Matthew Paris's chronicle of English history in the thirteenth century: see *Matthaei Parisiensis monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica majora*, ed. H. R. Luard, 7 vols., Rolls Series 57 (London, 1872–83), IV, 295–6.

⁴⁶ On the various editions of *Anglica historia*, see D. Hay, *Polydore Vergil: Renaissance Historian and Man of Letters* (Oxford, 1952), p. 79.

the city's history, for the practical needs of government'.⁴⁷ Latin histories of cities such as Milan, Faenza and Bologna appeared in the fourteenth century, alongside vernacular histories of Naples and Rome.⁴⁸

Dino Compagni's history of Florence, the *Cronica delle cose occorrenti ne' tempi suoi* (1310–12) is largely a chronological history of the city in its recent past, focusing on the factional rivalry between the Guelfs, who sided with the pope and the French monarchy, and the Ghibellines, who accepted the sovereignty of the Holy Roman emperor. Drawing on Compagni's own experiences in government, it is also a civic history, in that it concerns itself with the impact of violence and instability on the *popolo*, the good citizens of Florence who were often 'left very troubled and despaired of peace' or 'were left bewildered and dismayed' by the carnage around them.⁴⁹

Villani's chronicle, the *Nuova cronica*, is very much longer and more ambitious, similar to a universal history, which begins with the Tower of Babel and works up to his own times.⁵⁰ The mode is annalistic and empirical, employing a strict chronology and a wealth of what we might call hard data – numbers of men and horses in battles, the price of a bushel of grain, the numbers of students taking some form of educational course, the amount of wine by the quart consumed by the citizens of Florence. Inspired by the classical celebrations of Rome by Virgil, Lucan, Sallust and Orosius, and following Livy's model of structural organization, Villani drew on city and mercantile records to ground his work in what he regarded as historical fact while simultaneously making use of traditional origin legends. Foregrounding the connection between Florence and its Roman heritage to which earlier chronicles often alluded, Villani created the first coherent urban history of Florence, positioning it politically as the ally of the papacy (reflecting

⁴⁷ T. Dean, *The Towns of Italy in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester, 2000), p. 219. Flavio Biondo, writing in the mid-fifteenth century, drew extensively on Dandolo's *Chronica* for part of his description of Italy, *Italia illustrata*.

⁴⁸ S. Botterill, 'Minor Writers', in *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*, ed. P. Brand and L. Pertile, rev. edn (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 107–27 (p. 122).

⁴⁹ Dino Compagni's *Chronicle of Florence*, trans. D. E. Bornstein (Philadelphia, 1986), Book 3, chs. 8 and 9 (pp. 70 and 72).

⁵⁰ Villani's chronicle was continued after his death by his brother Matteo and, after Matteo's death, by his son Filippo, extending the original chronicle from 1346 to 1364. See P. Clarke, 'The Villani Chronicles', in *Chronicling History*, ed. Dale et al., pp. 113–43. Ernst Breisach refers to Villani as using 'the Christian sin-and-punishment cycle as the motor of change': *Historiography, Ancient, Medieval, and Modern* (Chicago, 1983), p. 152. The chronicle is edited by G. Porta, *Nuova cronica*, 3 vols. (Parma, 1990–1).

his own Guelf allegiance) and symbolically as the heir to Rome's ancient pre-eminence.⁵¹

Influenced by early humanist writers of the fourteenth century who had access to works of Cicero and Aristotle (especially the *Ethics*), urban historians in Italy introduced new themes to do with the ethics of republicanism and the importance of 'active participation in communal life'.⁵² The urban model now was not so much imperial Rome, admired by Dante, as republican Rome which provided the exemplar of civic government. George Holmes identified this as 'a new style of writing contemporary history, especially the political history of the city state, as an account of policies and causes and effects in which the events are ordered in a rational and artistic narrative in imitation of the historians of antiquity'.⁵³ At the beginning of the fifteenth century, Florence was again the subject of a major history written in Latin by Leonardo Bruni, a humanist who became a papal secretary and one of the city's chancellors.⁵⁴ In writing *Historiae Florentini populi*, which he began in 1415, Bruni took as his inspirations the early Greek historians, especially Thucydides and Polybius, relying on Livy, Orosius and Tacitus, among other Latin historians, for his account of early Italian history. He also looked to these classical sources for his historical methodology, creating a narrative account of regional history (as distinct from the universal histories of earlier writers such as Villani) punctuated by long speeches attributed to important figures whose words provided the explanation for their deeds. In contrast to Villani's chronicle style, Bruni retrieved the literary rhetoric of classical historians and re-established history as a form of literature.

While pioneering this new genre of humanist historiography, Bruni nevertheless relied on the medieval chronicle tradition for much of his information. His major source for the history of Florence is Villani's chronicle and its continuations, supplemented by other chronicles of Florence including those of Dino Compagni and Marchionne di Coppo

⁵¹ L. Green, *Chronicle into History: An Essay on the Interpretation of History in Florentine Fourteenth-Century Chronicles* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 9–10. Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography*, draws a line between the 'chronicles' of Compagni and Villani and the 'history' written by Leonardo Bruni and his successors (p. 11).

⁵² H. Baron, 'Leonardo Bruni: "Professional Rhetorician" or "Civic Humanist"?', *Past and Present* 36 (1967), 21–37 (p. 21).

⁵³ G. A. Holmes, 'The Emergence of an Urban Ideology at Florence c. 1250–1450', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 23 (1973), 111–34 (p. 112).

⁵⁴ Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography*, argues that Bruni was the first humanist historian who inaugurated a new method of historiography and created the framework of 'civic humanism' (pp. 15–20).

Stefani.⁵⁵ More than Villani, or even Livy, Bruni consciously set out to write a political history of Florence as a community, and his reference to 'populus' in his title as a synonym for republican power anticipates his interest throughout the work in the tension between domestic and external affairs and between republican and autocratic rule. A staunch republican who took pride in Florence's status as a free city, Bruni was among the first writers to elevate republican Rome above imperial Rome, a position he expounded most explicitly in his *Laudatio Florentinae urbis* (1403–4). In this extended encomium, Bruni criticized the tyrannical rule of the Roman emperors and presented Florence as 'the legitimate heir of the *Respublica romana*'.⁵⁶ In both the *Historiae* and the *Laudatio*, Bruni deplored the factional struggles which continually undermined the political strength of the city and saw the solution lying in a commitment to the common good supported by a strong oligarchical government of which he was himself a part.⁵⁷ As Denys Hay wrote, humanist historians 'often had an axe to grind'.⁵⁸

Leonardo Bruni acquired a number of students and followers during his lifetime, one of whom was Flavio Biondo. A notary who worked for much of his career as a secretary at the Curia in Rome, Biondo's great work of history was the *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum imperii decades*, 'Decades of Histories from the Decline of the Empire of the Romans', begun in 1439 and in circulation by about 1442.⁵⁹ This history of Rome, based on Livy's structural concept of chronological history divided into sections, started with the sack of Rome in AD 410 and continued up until Biondo's own time, remaining unfinished at his death.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ On Bruni's sources, see D. J. Wilcox, *The Development of Florentine Humanist Historiography in the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge MA, 1969), p. 32, n. 3; G. Ianziti, 'Challenging Chronicles: Leonardo Bruni's *History of the Florentine People*', in *Chronicling History*, ed. Dale et al., pp. 249–72 (pp. 263–4); Leonardo Bruni, *History of the Florentine People*, vol. 3: Books IX–XII, ed. and trans. J. Hankins (London, 2007), pp. xvi–xviii.

⁵⁶ H. Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1955), I, 168; see also pp. 43–9.

⁵⁷ Ianziti, 'Challenging Chronicles', argues convincingly that Bruni's *History*, though written independently, was nonetheless 'tinged with official ideology' which promoted 'government by an elite body of experts' (pp. 251–2). On Bruni's civic ideology, see J. Hankins, 'Humanism in the Vernacular: The Case of Leonardo Bruni', in *The Renaissance: Essays in Honor of Ronald G. Witt*, ed. C. S. Celenza and K. Gouwens (Leiden, 2006), pp. 11–29 (p. 15).

⁵⁸ Hay, 'Flavio Biondo', p. 36.

⁵⁹ The dating is suggested by Hay, 'Flavio Biondo', pp. 41–3. See also A. Mazzocco, 'Introduction', in *A New Sense of the Past: The Scholarship of Biondo Flavio (1392–1463)*, ed. A. Mazzocco and M. Laureys (Leuven, 2015), pp. 9–34.

⁶⁰ For Biondo's career, see Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography*, pp. 34–5; N. Pellegrino, 'From the Roman Empire to Christian Imperialism: The Work of

Just as Leonardo Bruni had inaugurated a humanist historiography that broke with the earlier chronicle model of medieval historians, Biondo shaped a new narrative of Roman history in which the destruction of Rome signalled the inexorable decline of the empire. While medieval historians had insisted that the empire continued in a Christian form, Biondo proposed instead that the period of late antiquity saw Italy as one of the new nations emerging from the rubble of empire.

To support his concept of Italy as a distinct nation, Biondo looked to the material evidence of the cities and their physical presence in the landscape. An antiquarian sensibility underpins one of his earliest works, his account of ancient Rome, *Roma instaurata*, 'Rome Restored', written between 1444 and 1446. Based on literary, archaeological and epigraphic records and the evidence of classical authors, *Roma instaurata* epitomizes the Renaissance taste for classical chorography, the form of regional description and history which could include a diachronic overview of the development of regional towns and cities and their built environments. Biondo's aim in *Roma instaurata* was 'to offer a vision of ancient Rome',⁶¹ using the topography of the city and its material remains – ruins, coins, relics left in the ground – to recreate the buildings, institutions and monuments of the old city. Deliberately turning away from the medieval tradition of the *Mirabilia urbis Romae*, the standard pilgrim guide to Rome that emphasized the legendary and even supernatural elements of its buildings, Biondo interprets the symbolic value of the monuments as representatives not only of contemporary institutional practices in the city but of 'the decline of greatness'.⁶²

In a later work, *Italia illustrata*, 'Italy Illuminated', finished in 1453, Biondo extended his topographical survey of Rome to produce a gazetteer of many of the cities of the Italian peninsula, following classical histories and describing both the geography and history of towns in an act of literary nation-building. Again breaking with previous traditions of civic history, which typically started with origin legends and founding heroes, Biondo uses topography and the achievements of individuals to illustrate the flux of events that give a city its meaning and identity over time. Describing the city of Ravenna, he writes,

Flavio Biondo', in *Chronicling History*, ed. Dale et al., pp. 273–98; Hay, 'Flavio Biondo'.

⁶¹ R. Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1988), p. 68.

⁶² Pellegrino, 'From the Roman Empire', p. 280. The *Mirabilia* is a much-copied anonymous guidebook dating to at least the twelfth century. See *The Marvels of Rome: Mirabilia urbis Romae*, ed. and trans. F. M. Nichols, 2nd edn, ed. E. Gardiner (New York, 1986).

Cinxit Ravennam muris nunc exstantibus Tiberius imperator, quod litterae docent cubitales ad portam eius clausam, quae Aurea dicitur, quadrato lapide speciosam. Auxit vero ipsam Ostrogotha gens: cuius rex Theodericus, Italiae omnis, Dalmatiae, Hungariae, Germaniae et partis non parvae Galliarum dominus, annis duo de quadraginta eam incoluit civitatem et, quod constat, superbas in illa aedes basilicasque construxit.⁶³

‘The emperor Tiberius built the walls around Ravenna that are still there today, as an inscription attests in eighteen-inch high letters on the city gate called the Porta Aurea, handsomely built of squared stone and now blocked off. The Ostrogoths enlarged the city, and their king Theoderic – ruler over the whole of Italy, Dalmatia, Hungary, Germany and no small part of France – lived in the city for thirty-eight years and, as is well known, built splendid palaces and basilicas there.’

This description typifies Biondo’s methodology of combining topography, history and the deeds of important individuals to give a city a distinct and even unique identity. Taken as a whole, Biondo’s circuit of Italy, a journey he undertook himself, comprises a mosaic of towns and cities located in a landscape of hills and rivers that together form a map of the nation.

Biondo’s chorography provided a model for later European historians, including the English humanist ones such as Stow. John Leland’s (c. 1506–52) *Itinerary*, recording his journey around England and Wales starting in 1535 at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries, was directly modelled on Biondo’s journey around Italy. Besides his official interest in the books held by the monastic libraries which were in the process of being shut down, Leland followed Biondo’s antiquarian and archaeological lead in examining the material remains of Roman buildings in the towns that he passed through on his journey. Leland also follows Biondo’s chorographical practice of providing brief historical accounts of some of the towns, mentioning events associated particularly with notable battles and prominent individuals, as in this description of Drayton in Shropshire:

At Blorehethe, a mile above Drayton by north, was a feelde faught bytwene King Edwardes men and Henry the 6.⁶⁴ The Erle of Saresbyri [Salisbury] and northen men on King Edwardes parte overcam the Lordes Audeley (slain) and Dudeley (woundid) with Quene Margaret, wife to Henry the 6, and Chestershir men lost the feld. She cam

⁶³ Biondo Flavio, *Italy Illuminated*, vol. 1: *Books I–IV*, ed. and trans. J. A. White (London, 2005), 6.23 (pp. 298–9).

⁶⁴ This was one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses fought in 1459, when Henry VI was still on the throne.

Eccleshall thither. Hauls [John Hales] Bisshop of Chester her chape-
leyn caussid the queene to ly ther.</P>⁶⁵

The vision of William Camden (1551–1623) was informed by classical writers such as Strabo, Polybius and Tacitus, but it also encompassed both the chronicle style of Leonardo Bruni, evident in Camden's *Annals of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (1615), and the antiquarian research-based chorography of Flavio Biondo. Camden's mammoth work, *Britannia*, appearing first in Latin in 1586 and in English translation in 1610, forms what amounts to a verbal map of Britain, tracing its rivers and coastlines, its villages and castles, its monuments and cities, pausing for brief descriptions and historical anecdotes which convey Camden's pedantic yet undeniably enthusiastic engagement with his task of descriptive cartography. The *Britannia*, based on Camden's own travels, antiquarian research and his use of Leland's notes, was intended as a tour of Roman Britain, directly analogous to Biondo's tour of Italy, and was later expanded to include Anglo-Saxon and Viking Britain.⁶⁶ Like Biondo, Camden is engaged in a process of nation-building, redefining the borders and boundaries of Britain as part of the Tudor agenda on the eve of the union of the crowns of England and Scotland in 1603.⁶⁷ John Stow, who refers to Camden as 'my loving friend', uses the *Britannia* as one of his sources for the *Survey*, particularly for the early history of Saxon London, transferring the techniques of chorography from regions to a single city as Biondo himself did with Rome.⁶⁸

Conclusion

This chapter has offered an alternative to the general view that there is little or no urban history in medieval Britain by redefining what urban history looked like in early British writing. There is in fact evidence for a continuous tradition of writing about towns in Britain in a variety of genres and modes, and most of them were directly influenced by

⁶⁵ *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the Years 1535–1543, Parts IX, X, and XI*, ed. L. T. Smith (London, 1910), p. 12.

⁶⁶ F. J. Levy, *Tudor Historical Thought* (San Marino CA, 1967), p. 148; R. C. Richardson, 'William Camden and the Re-Discovery of England', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 78 (2004), 108–23 (p. 116).

⁶⁷ Denys Hay says, 'One suspects that in this way Camden did more to unite Britain in the long run than did King James.' D. Hay, *Annalists and Historians: Western Historiography from the VIIIth to the XVIIIth Centuries* (London, 1977), p. 151. For a further gloss on this, see Richardson, 'William Camden', p. 120.

⁶⁸ Stow, *Survey*, ed. Kingsford, I, 8.

classical and Italian models emanating from Rome and from medieval Italian city-states. Though urban history as a systematic chronology of individual towns and cities in Britain did not emerge as a distinctive genre much before the eighteenth century, an interest in the material presence of urban settlements and their antiquity found expression through classical models of national history, chorography and epideictic description, models inherited and used by clerical writers in Britain as early as Alcuin in the eighth century. Both the British and the Italian models of urban history articulated a political ideology regarding the importance of individual towns and cities within a larger organizational structure of state or nation and the vitality of their physical presence as evidence of an ancient Roman past.

There are therefore identifiable similarities between the kinds of writing about cities found in medieval and Renaissance Italy and those worked into larger national histories of Britain. As British cities began to grow in size and wealth from the late fourteenth century, they became the salient markers in verbal and visual mappings of the nation. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the dominant mode of urban history was chorography, regional descriptions in which towns and cities were embedded as key centres of economic and political activity in the Tudor nation. For this genre, English and Welsh writers were directly influenced by Italian humanist models, in particular those histories and chorographies written by Italian civic officials who had a professional and often personal investment in specific cities and their politics. The regional history of the Low Countries written by the Florentine government official Luigi Guicciardini (1478–1551) and published in 1588 as *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi* had a direct influence on one of the early county histories of Wales, George Owen's *The Description of Pembrokeshire*, completed in 1603. Commenting on the untapped potential of peat as a source of fuel, Owen comments, 'Guicciardini, in his description of Holland, commends this as [...] the second chief commodity of that province.'⁶⁹ In Wales as much as in England, Italian histories and chorographies were circulating and known to antiquarians.

Urban history, as the diachronic account of a city's past, can be explained as a reflex of political autonomy and civic individualism. While medieval historians were constructing the English nation, towns were interesting mainly as witnesses, seen from the outside, to the history of the nation. But from the Renaissance onwards, with the rise of empire fuelled by urban economic activity, towns and cities took charge

⁶⁹ George Owen of Henllys, *The Description of Pembrokeshire*, ed. D. Miles (Llandysul, 1994), p. 95.

of their own destinies by writing their own histories. Whereas William FitzStephen celebrated London as the home of a saint, John Stow actually brought it into being as an organic entity whose history justified its political and economic pre-eminence.

Afterword: The Nature of Anglo-Italian Cultural Exchanges

Helen Fulton

The contributors and editors started out with particular ambitions for this book: to extend existing debates about Anglo-Italian cultural relations in the Middle Ages; to cover as wide a range of disciplinary interests as possible; and to encourage further conversations about the significance of cultural exchanges between Britain and Italy before the age of the Grand Tour.

We hope that the book achieves these aims and goes some way towards establishing a new approach to the study of cultural exchange. In every chapter, it is the lived experience of individuals, substantiated by written evidence, that shapes our collective understanding of how different cultures interact with each other. From Margaret Bridges's map-makers and my own survey of urban historians to Italian merchants and bankers in London (Helen Bradley, Bart Lambert, Ignazio Del Punta), from Victoria Flood's Franciscans to owners of manuscripts (Carolyn Collette and Michele Campopiano), the processes of cultural interaction, subtle as they are and often evident only in hindsight, are shown to take place at the level of human experience.

This is not to say that we take a simplistic liberal-humanist view of the individual as the source of human agency and social change. Each chapter of the book locates individuals not so much as products of 'society' at large, and certainly not as essentialist already-formed individuals, but as the constructs of particular discursive communities. It is in these communities that cultural exchanges are most likely to take place. Carolyn Collette writes about Richard de Bury as a book collector interacting with other book collectors, notably Petrarch and the royal court. Helen Bradley describes the Italian community living in London and their interactions with the locals while, like many modern migrants, maintaining a sense of their own identity as Italians. Ignazio Del Punta uses the discourse of economics to construct a community of Italian bankers in England and their relations with the Crown. Victoria Flood focuses on the Franciscan community and their uses of the discourse of

prophecy to support their worldview. Cultural interaction, then, is here re-theorized as the sharing, exchange, and assimilation of ideologically meaningful discourses.

Another way in which this book moves the conversation forward is by its focus on material and intellectual activities other than humanism. As Michele Campopiano said in his Introduction, 'The field of medieval British-Italian relations has typically been dominated by discussions of humanism and literary borrowings', and although this has undoubtedly been a highly productive and influential approach, and will continue to be so, we have tried to do something different. Leaving 'humanism' to be defined and exemplified by others, we have instead illuminated some of the material activities out of which humanism emerged: book collecting, the mobility of money, goods, and labour, the circulation of literary and historical texts, increasing urbanization, writing the past, depicting the known world in maps. In my own chapter I describe how 'cities and towns came to be represented in texts as sovereign individuals', a form of representation associated with humanism, though my topic is not humanism as such but the writing of urban histories.

There is a further dimension to the book, which is its timeliness and relevance to the present. Britain is, once again, reviewing its relationship with Europe, a profound shift in political and economic direction which highlights the imperative to ensure that diverse communities can continue to interact. Carolyn Collette and Bart Lambert have both pointed to the importance of cultural links across Europe as the pathway to innovation, from Avignon and Bruges to London and back again. The mobility of people as well as ideas is a notable feature of all our chapters, implying a parallel with the benefits and challenges of modern migration. Helen Bradley's account of 'aliens' in London and the process of denization or naturalization, undertaken by expatriate Welsh as well as Italians living in London, is a reminder that mobility of labour has long been a complex and highly political process. Most fundamental of all is the movement of money and economic resources across nations, a process now associated with a globalization whose central tenets were already evident in the 'global' Middle Ages. Though Ignazio Del Punta rightly makes the disclaimer that 'a direct comparison between the late medieval financial crisis and those which have dramatically affected the world's economy since 2007 makes no real sense', we can nevertheless discern a pattern in these repeated crises that reverberate down the centuries to the present. Whether dealing directly with banking systems and international trade or considering writerly attitudes to worldliness and power, our book affirms the centrality of economic operations to cultural production and cultural identity.

Afterword

We hope that the findings of this book will point towards a new kind of debate about identity and transnational exchange, one based in material activity, lived experience, and discursive communities. To repeat the words used by Michele Campopiano in closing his Introduction: 'There is still much work ahead.'

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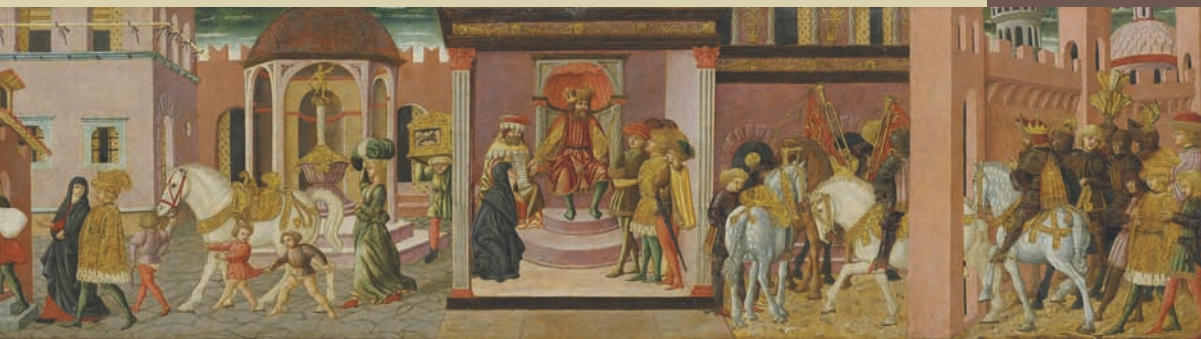
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Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, the rise of international trade, the growth of towns and cities, and the politics of diplomacy all helped to foster productive and far-reaching connections and cultural interactions between Britain and Italy; equally, the flourishing of Italian humanism from the late fourteenth century onwards had a major impact on intellectual life in Britain. The aim of this book is to illustrate the continuity and the variety of these exchanges during the period. Each chapter focuses on a specific area (book collection, historiography, banking, commerce, literary production), highlighting the significance of the productive interchange of people and ideas across diverse cultural communities; it is the lived experience of individuals, substantiated by written evidence, that shapes the book's collective understanding of how two European cultures interacted with each other so fruitfully.

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